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By

LEAH
WEISS





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LEAH WEISS

I OBJECT

By
LEAH WEISS



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DEDICATED
TO
THE MEMORY OF
MY DEPARTED HUSBAND
Alexander Weiss

L. W.

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PROLOGUE

Winifred Rosalye Stanton was about to step into a Rolls-Royce car, that her father had given her as a wedding gift, when her attention was attracted to the magnificent specimen of manhood who was standing with a deferential air, waiting for her to enter. To the car, a thing of beauty, was added the chauffeur with the air and appearance of the descendant of kings. She wondered vaguely where she had seen him before and then remembered that on Derby day, Sir Chesterfield had taken her to Churchill Downs, and during luncheon, her attention was called to this man who was assigned to serve at their table. She recalled that her father had been telling one of his friends that he had raised this boy and that his grandmother was one of those devoted, faithful slaves who was part of the household of this aristocratic, Southern family.

Winifred was particularly interested, inasmuch as she remembered that her old mammy had a little granddaughter whom she played with when she was a child and she had often marveled at the contrast this sister and brother presented. The sister was as black as the ace of spades and the brother was often mistaken for a white child. She was meditating on the problem presented to her by this man at the wheel, and his square shoulders and dignified carriage brought to her mind the man she was to marry on the morrow. Her mental comment took the form

of an inquiry—"By what process of evolution had this man who seemed but of the jungle of yesterday, suddenly reached this state of perfection?" It took very close observation to detect the slight tinge of the darker hue which proclaimed him the offspring of foreign extraction.

Then again her mind reverted to Sir Chesterfield. The image of the man rose before her, who was to be her husband before nightfall of the following day. It would be what society calls a marriage of convenience. Her father's millions were to be exchanged for a title and Sir Alexander Gordon Chesterfield would make her milady.

Sir Chesterfield with his inevitable drawl—his monocle forever raised inquiringly to his eye—his caddy with his golf sticks seemingly ever at his side—his unchanging, expressionless face—the thought of him brought to Winifred a sickening revolt at the fact that she must spend the rest of her life with this human automaton; this cold, passionless excuse of a man. Winifred almost felt that water, and not red blood, filled his veins.

Kentucky had thrown open her hospitable arms to honor America's sons and the World War heroes, and to Louisville fell the good fortune to act as host to the illustrious hero, General Pershing, and those who made up his retinue. The Seelbach Hotel, in which was vested the pride of Kentucky, embellished its artistic furnishings—its rare paintings—its Meissner china—its exquisitely delicate Bohemian glassware—by adding the rich and deep-dyed colors of the red, the white, and the blue, and with welcome on the doorstep, and palms and flowers entwined in the passageways, forming an arcade which led to

the banquet hall—on this memorable occasion, Winifred and Sir Chesterfield met and plighted their troth.

Winifred wondered since whether it was a part of the atmosphere of this exciting event that made Sir Chesterfield appear different in her eyes. She recalled that when he caught sight of her the monocle had dropped from his eye, and the beautiful, clear, gray eyes looked at her admiringly—the light flaxen hair thrown back carelessly from the aristocratic, kindly face, impressed her with its luxuriance, but somehow the following day when he came to her father to ask formally for her hand, his manner was so correct that the whole man seemed transformed, and with the enthusiasm of the day before evaporated, she could not help but feel a distaste for this union.

The weeks that followed the betrothal, strengthened her in the knowledge that Sir Chesterfield would never for a moment forget that he came from a long line of ancestry, whose standards he must always live up to, and so if a heart throbbed under that calm exterior, she had not as yet succeeded in discovering it.

Then bitterly she thought of her girlhood days—her dreams of the ideal of the man who would some day take up his life with her and perfect God's plan of a perfect union—when love only would be a factor to make them as one; and to-morrow would end that dream, and the kiss at the altar would consecrate her to a duty which she knew would only bring her a coronet.

She had a mad longing to make this day all her own—to order the chauffeur to take her into the heart

of the woods among the wild, untamed creatures, who knew nothing but the joy of living.

She was so busy with her thoughts that she had not noticed that William seemed to be having a little trouble with the wheel. Some slight imperfection made it necessary to stop at the office of the firm to make an adjustment. The trouble was more serious than William at first thought, and as it would be a matter of hours to correct the defect, they were asked to leave the car and take a neat little roadster for the shopping expedition that Winifred had planned.

When they drove away, Winifred heard herself saying to the chauffeur, "William, I am not going to shop to-day—take me out to the country—drive fast." A sudden jolt threw her violently against the side of the car. "Miss, I am sorry—that was a bad place in the road," William apologized.

She was just a bit disconcerted, and then as strange, wild thoughts began to race through her brain, she asked herself if she was going mad. What evil force had taken possession of her on this, the eve of her wedding day? She felt the urge to let this excitement wear off by some feat of daring—of courting danger—and with the blood pounding in her veins and every nerve tense in her body, she gave the order to William to "step on it."

William looked very much amazed. He and Winifred were children together, but even as a child, he never for one moment was permitted to forget that she was his master's daughter, and in her imperious fashion she commanded respect and worship from all who knew her. This madcap girl to-day, that he was driving, risking not only her own life but his

also, was not the Miss Stanton that she appeared to be when she returned from boarding school.

William's education had been rather complete. Mr. Stanton had planned to make him an overseer in his cotton plant, and while he had never presumed to take advantage of the opportunities offered him through and because of his mental training, somehow to-day, this reckless girl had opened up to him a new vista, and at her command to "step on it," the questioning look on his face brought a tinge of embarrassed color to Winifred's cheeks.

The speedy little car seemed as if it were flying through the air. The hum of the motor was singing in Winifred's ears, and the road stretched ahead of them like a long, gray ribbon. As far as the eye could see it was untraveled, and fortunately for them they had the right of way. William's attention was now centered on the wheel—the slightest inattention would bring disaster. He never before felt his inequality as he did at this moment. He was powerless—helpless—a word of suggestion or advice would be sharply rebuked or possibly would lead to a more severe punishment, should Winifred resent his interference. All he could do was to pray inwardly that she would come to her senses before it was too late.

While these thoughts were going through William's mind they had almost reached the bend in the road. Winifred was saying something, but the words were carried off by the wind. William felt a light touch on his hand—and then, a crash and darkness.

When William opened his eyes the car was some distance away from him, on its side, and Winifred was lying about ten feet away. Slowly he strug-

gled to his feet and found that with the exception of a slight scalp wound he was not seriously injured, but he could see that Winifred was hurt. A growing fear clutched at his heart; the silent figure lying on the ground motionless, seemed dead. Great God! what would he do?

He turned to see if there was a house nearby, and saw, running towards him down the road, two men, one carrying a pail of water and the other some bandages. Upon a little hillock stood what appeared to be an inn and when the men reached William, they told him they had witnessed the accident from the window and that the owner had sent the water and bandages.

William dipped a towel in the cold water and laid it on Winifred's face, but his efforts to revive her were futile. Failing in this, he lifted her in his arms and carried her to the inn. When they arrived the inn-keeper had already telephoned for a physician. William was shown to a room and laid Winifred carefully on the divan. She opened her eyes with a moan of pain and William, glancing down at her slipper, saw that the buckle had embedded itself in her tender flesh. The white, lacerated flesh gave William a shock that was almost physical pain. He knew the wise thing to do was to remove the slipper immediately before the foot began to swell, and this he did tenderly. He spoke no word while performing this act, but Winifred felt a tear drop on the wounded spot.

When the doctor arrived William discreetly left the room and Winifred noticed that there was a look of reproach in William's eyes. The look haunted her. After the doctor had dressed her wound and

examined her carefully, he found her injuries minor and told her that only a miracle had saved her. She was badly shaken up and he advised that she stay at the inn that night and gave her an opiate to make sleep possible and relieve the pain in her foot.

Winifred asked the doctor to tell William to get in touch with her family, and she was just dozing off when the chauffeur appeared in the doorway and told her that her father and *fiance* would be there almost immediately.

Winifred kept looking at William while he was talking, and somehow that look of tender reproach remained fixed in her consciousness, but she felt a delicate sense of rest overcome her and she slowly closed her eyes.

The deft hands of the maid were putting the finishing touches to Winifred's wedding gown and she was adjusting a stray lock that had escaped from the orangeblossom wreath that held her veil in place. Faintly came to her ears the chimes that announced that the arrangements had been completed for the wedding ceremony. Just a short time and her father would lead her up the aisle and give her to the man of her choice. From a window overlooking the servants quarters she caught a glimpse of the barn gayly decorated with bunting and a band of youngsters playing popular tunes. Winifred smilingly looked on, remembering that her father had consented that William's sister should be married that same day, and that would give the servants an opportunity to get more excitement out of something that they

had a personal interest in. Through the open door of the little cottage, not far from the barn, Winifred saw the preparations going on for this other bride and the hearty peals of laughter ringing through the air, brought home to her forcibly the gulf that stretched between these children of nature who had not progressed and who had thrown the burden of responsibility on the shoulders of their employers.

Those who remained in the employ of their former masters, when freedom came to them, continued to enjoy the comforts and benefits that the landed proprietors had to offer, and so Mr. Stanton's plantation boasted of keeping together whole families who served with a great deal of devotion and loyalty.

Old Uncle George Washington, sitting in front of the cabin door, was the great-great-grandfather of the bride, and around the cabin fire he would oftentimes draw a crowd with bulging eyes and gaping mouths, to listen to tales of the good old days of long ago.

Winifred recalled one story in particular which she, too, had often heard when a child. He used to start off in this manner:

"Ma lil'l Missy—you sho would be su'prised if you seen dat George Washington when he crossed over on all dat ice on da Delaware. Mistah Benjamin Franklin was a pushin' da boat along and Mistah Alexander Hamilton, he got out and pushed da boat when it couldn't go no moh; and dat cake of ice dat he was standin' on—it sho done froze his feet, and when he pulled his boot off dat night, he found a great big fish had crawled in. Dey sho was glad, Missy, 'cause dey didn'n have nothin' to eat dat night, and Mistah George Washington, he built a fiah wid his own hands, and dey called me in to fry da fish.

But you know, Missy, dey was somethin' awful queer about dat fish; dere was a hundred soldiers and one fish. What you s'pose dey was goin' to do 'bout it, Missy? Well, you jus' come closer and I'll tell you. Dey all got down on dere knees and dey raised dere faces to da sky and prayed de Lawd to multiply dat fish, and, Missy, you think dat's all? Dey prayed dat de loaf of bread dat was stale and moldy would grow into a great, big, fat raisin bread, and, Missy, dere was a great big apparition 'peared in da sky and dere came tumblin' down into de pan thousands and thousands of fish, and, Missy, all de sta's had opened up and all de lil'l sta'fishes bro't a loaf down in dere moufs. Yes, sah, Abraham Lincoln told em dat he was comin' down on earth out of de sky and was goin' to set us all free. O' course, Missy, I didn' want to be free—yo' know youse all was too good to me, but dem other niggahs dey was mighty glad."

Winifred would walk away with great big questioning eyes and ask her mother if old Uncle Washington was telling the truth, but mother would always laugh at Winifred and tell her when she grew older she could read all about it and find out for herself. Winifred was still laughing at some of the comic reminiscences of this happy, carefree people, when she saw old Aunt Dinah staggering under a pail filled with fried chicken. One of the little ragamuffins grabbed a piece of the chicken and Aunt Dinah dropped the pail,—made a wild dash—caught the little rogue and gave him a good wallop.

Some of the other Negroes were stringing lanterns and the preparations for the feast were in full swing when Sir Chesterfield came in—kissed Winifred lightly on the cheek, and around her neck he placed

his wedding gift, a priceless string of gems, worth a king's ransom. She was looking at them admiringly, when the door opened and in came the bridesmaids, twelve exotic flowers, each of them dressed in the colors representing a different flower, and followed by the maid of honor.

First came the little Daisy laying a token of love at her feet—and then the Violet blue spoke of love so true—the Orchid rare of love brought its share—the sweet Tearose enveloped her with its fragrance—the majestic Lily added a touch of dignity—the American Beauty mingled its rich red coloring with her heart throbs—the Pansy shyly unfolded its petals—the Carnation in rosy pink clad, led Sweet Pea by the hand—and the Narcissus sweet, with its cloying breath intoxicated Golden Rod, whose nodding head was weighted down with Smilax and encircled Winifred around about, as Geranium helped Aster tie the knot.

Winifred's mother came in on her father's arm—her mother kissed her and, having rearranged the folds of her wedding gown, stood off admiringly surveying her bridal veil with its priceless point de venice lace. "Winifred, darling, you would grace any manor," said her mother, "and I know that Sir Chesterfield will make you very happy. We met him as he was coming out of your room and the poor dear was wiping his eyes and told us you looked like a vision. He is desperately in love with you, Winifred, and is so excited that he does not notice he has forgotten his monocle."

Winifred's father kissed her forehead, gave her his arm, and led her down the broad colonial staircase to the car, from which hung festoons of white rib-

bon, held in place by the wings of the motor cap, to which were fastened clusters of lilies of the valley. A short drive took them to the church and when Winifred was about to cross the threshold, everything grew black. When her vision cleared she was walking up the aisle and the excited wedding guests had risen at her entrance, and she heard a great murmur of surprise on all sides. Glancing over her right shoulder, she caught the incredulous expression of one of her guests. All eyes seemed to be fixed on the figure beside her and she wondered why her father should attract and hold the attention of those present. She felt it would be very poor taste to see what caused this strange reception, so she kept her eyes fixed intently on the altar and the bishop waiting to receive them.

The beautiful church with its stained-glass windows was banked with flowers. Every casement was filled with lilies of the valley and orchids in profusion. Two little flower maids were scattering rose petals as they continued up the aisle, and as they crushed them under their feet, the aroma and perfume seemed to mount up to the organ loft and be wafted back to her in the beautiful singing tones of the organ, which was playing Lohengrin's wedding march. Into her ears reverberated again and again "Here comes the bride—here comes the bride"—and then childishly, aimlessly, at this solemn hour, she asked herself, "Why didn't they say something about the groom?" As this thought passed through her mind, she began wondering what her father's feelings were on this auspicious occasion. She glanced at him and—was she dreaming—was she going mad—was this a hallucination of the senses—was someone

playing a practical joke on her—this man at her side was William, her chauffeur, the brother of that other bride—the man whom her father had patronized! Why, this thing could not be!

She remembered her ride with William; he had not asked her to marry him—surely her father could not have given his consent to this altogether absurd union. She tried to remember what had happened shortly before she gave the order to William to slow down the car, and when he failed to hear, she recalled that she wanted to attract his attention by putting her hand on his, and that she remembered nothing more.

Evidently all this had taken place while she was in a subconscious state. The social order of things was reversed—the world had gone mad—no! no! she would not go through with it—she would defy her father—she could not—she would not be happy with William. She tried to cry out—she tried to protest—it seemed as though every faculty was dormant—that she could not struggle against this frightful thing that was about to happen to her.

They had reached the altar steps—the bishop received them with a startled look on his face, but said nothing and began to read the wedding service. Would nothing happen to prevent this perfectly ridiculous marriage? Where would they go after they were married? Surely her mother would not permit her to live with them, and William's people would call them poor white trash. Then she heard the bishop say, "Speak now, or forever after hold your peace." She was praying inwardly—why didn't her father come to the rescue—why did he allow this thing to go on—they would only condemn

her for it later,—and suddenly, as she was about to swoon, a voice came ringing up the aisle, “I object! I object! I object!”

She saw the relieved look on the faces of the wedding guests; she opened her eyes and sat bolt upright, and standing at the divan were her father, Sir Chesterfield, and the doctor, and she caught the last words, “I object to your moving her to-night—she will be better at the inn.”

Sir Chesterfield fell on his knees and kissing the wounded spot, said, “My poor, poor Winifred, is the pain very bad?” Winifred saw the boyish and enthusiastic face—all the polish and veneer had disappeared when fear for Winifred had struck at his heart. The thought that the accident might prove serious had upset his equilibrium. Winifred was hoping that she would never awaken from this new dream of the face of the man who was to be her husband.

The doctor and her father withdrew and her awakening brought with it everlasting happiness.

PREFACE

Intermarriage can be possible only if you can say at the altar, "Your people shall be my people and your God shall be my God."

No household can stand when God is not enshrined in the hearts and the minds of the occupants, and no ties are binding or sacred that are not sanctioned by God and man. We are the arbiters of our own lives to a certain point only. So long as we do not interfere with the laws that govern the social relations existent in the human family and conflict with religious precepts, we are permitted to carry out our plan of what we think is conducive to our happiness and well-being, but just as soon as we show a tendency to wander from the course laid out for us, society steps in and bars the way.

If we disregard the warning, persist in following our own bent, we are compelled to take a path branching off from the highway—so, we isolate ourselves from our loved ones, and that love that caused us to wander away from our hearths must be almost of divine origin to withstand the pangs of regret that come to all of us when we sever the ties of blood and forget religious teachings.

I Object

CHAPTER I

Drifting

The palatial steamer was slowly making her way out of New York harbor. The duchess was gazing into the throng ashore, trying to get a glimpse of her dear sister and niece. Finally she caught sight of them and waved a last farewell, then made her way to her stateroom where Elynor Markley, her secretary, had preceded her by a few moments. She found many gifts of fruit and flowers but they aroused little enthusiasm. She was tired from the effects of the unhappy events which had destroyed her mental peace and exhausted her physically.

When she entered, Elynor rose to meet her.

"Duchess," she said, "I have a letter for you which I know you'll be glad to get. Lucy has prepared your bath and I thought you would like to read it while you are resting."

"Dear Elynor, you are always so considerate," the duchess replied gently, "I don't know what I would have done without you during the last troubled months in which you have stood so bravely at my side."

"Why, Duchess, if I serve you for the rest of my life I shall never be able to repay you for your generosity to me."

Lucy entered the room and handed the duchess

her robe. While Lucy was taking down her hair the duchess opened the letter and was glad to see that it was from Maurice Gilbert.

"Well, Elynor," she said, "Sir Gilbert evidently came back from his mysterious mission. If you will excuse me I will read it now, I am sure he will have lots of interesting things to tell me."

Briarcliff Manor,
Thursday, May 18.

MY DEAR DUCHESS:—

I am indeed sorry that I did not have the opportunity to bid you farewell as you left on this trip, which will mean so much to you in your present frame of mind.

I not only wish you God's speed but hope that you will come back to us with joy in your heart and bloom on your cheeks, that your eyes will imprison a ray of the sun and that the moonbeams will give them an added luster. Had I returned in time I would have accompanied you on the steamer, but I have promised myself that I would follow on the next boat if nothing occurs to upset my plans.

I have a very great surprise for you and news that will give you a thrill; but, before telling you of this event that will bring happiness to so many of those who have been our lifelong friends and companions, I am going to ask you to permit me to say a few things which I hope you will consider carefully in the leisure hours which are before you on this ocean voyage.

I am very happy to know that Elynor is with you, and although you impose this isolation upon yourself you must cease assuming this attitude towards a situation that we have no control over.

You are no longer in your first youth and, unfortunately, you see only the serious in life, but you went away to forget the dreary side and to find in new surroundings and happy experiences, that to you,



RABBI ALEXANDER WEISS

life still holds a bright promise for the future. I hope you will not stand in your own light. If you will permit me, I will show you the fallacy of your reasoning.

You have been fortunate in having everything that is denied to many—wonderful parents, devoted sisters and brothers, a husband few women had the privilege of possessing, and in him and through him you had the opportunity to do big things throughout his lifetime. When your sorrow over his death has faded into the past, you will again take up the same work.

Where is your optimism of the past, you who saw good in everything? Why not feel that this was only a device of God to awaken in you the many faculties still lying dormant? If it had not been that it came to you at a time when the world was suffering and crying out for the sympathy and understanding of men, you would never have gone into the camps and there found tragedy that was the outcome of this great, tremendous struggle of the "survival of the fittest." You would perhaps simply have remained at home and carried out the task assigned to you in your community in a small way. Instead, it was your great privilege to suffer with those who were suffering and to find yourself and realize that if love for you was no longer possible, a greater, a better, a diviner thing had come to take its place—*that* great love which, being impersonal, becomes divine.

The world to-day is chaos; we need people of understanding to straighten us out. You have not been to Europe since the war and you do not know that with your super-sensitive nature you will find a condition that will horrify you. You will wish you were a super-woman to impress upon the minds of those in power the great and desperate need of the nations. All eyes are turned to America—America who has combined with her idealism, good, sound, substantial principles, who is using a waiting policy until the nations will have agreed that they are ready for her to step in, and with wholesome counsel and

material aid, to bring about an adjustment to make a world peace possible.

I think I have given you enough advice for the moment, and I hope that you will while away the hours in doing the little trivial things that lessen the nervous strain that sapped your vitality and threw you into such a morbid state.

And now I am certain that you will not only be astonished at what I am about to tell you, but know that it will take some thought on your part to lay out a line of conduct which will gradually bring the result I am hoping for.

Michael Markley has come back to us. I know you will gasp. I hope Elynor will not be present when you read this letter, for she must be kept in complete ignorance of the facts until you are sure that she will be prepared to accept this great joy that has come to her after so many years of hardships and despair.

I received the wire from Michael a week ago. He will tell you his story as he told it to me, and I envy you that you will be privileged in seeing the joy in the faces of those two beings who never expected to see each other again. I will tell you briefly the plans in which you are to play such an important part.

We are all dreadfully afraid that the shock of the meeting may do Elynor more harm than good, and so we decided that you must draw from her the entire story of her first meeting with Michael up to the time he left her. In this way you will gradually prepare her by suggesting the possibility that Michael may be alive and perhaps longing to come back to her. You will instill the hope and set her thinking. When he suddenly appears before her his presence will not seem but the realization of a dream.

I know, Duchess, that knowing Michael as slightly as you do, you would not recognize him now. He is so changed that somehow I feel that I want to stand at attention when speaking to him. Dear little Elynor, how I rejoice in this wonderful, wonderful thing that is about to come to her.

Michael embarked on the same steamer and has no fear of Elynor recognizing him. However, he is going to keep out of her way as much as possible. Toward the end of the voyage you will see sitting at the captain's table a very distinguished man in military attire and you will know that it is Michael. A nod from you will indicate that Elynor is sufficiently prepared to meet him. I won't give you any more details as I am sure you know just what to do and just how to act to bring about a happy climax.

With my very warmest personal greetings, I am
always

Your friend,

MAURICE GILBERT.

P. S. Harold Duane L'Amour, my nephew, is on his way over to take a post-graduate course at the Conservatoire of Music, in Paris, and I have written to him that you will be on the steamer, and if he can be of service to you, do not hesitate to call on him. I should feel very much gratified if you, in turn, will permit him to join you on the evenings when your time will not be occupied. I am sure you will enjoy a musical evening with him, as he has made great strides as a composer and conductor, and in spite of his extreme youth he has attracted much attention by his extraordinary technique and his masterly interpretation of the Wagnerian operas. You will remember, Duchess, that I often spoke of his mother, who was my favorite sister, and who had married a very talented musician. She took up her residence in Bonne, the home of Beethoven, and at an early age my nephew, Harold, became a great lover of that illustrious master. In addition to this, he is a great idealist and dreamer and, on the whole, I think that you will only gain by trying to know him well.

The duchess had been so engrossed in the letter that she had not noticed that Elynor had slipped from the room. Her maid was just putting the finishing touches to her dinner gown when Elynor re-

turned. Her color was heightened and her eyes were shining.

"Duchess," Elynor began, "I just saw a most distinguished officer talking with the captain. It seemed when I passed that he made some comment regarding me. Did you notice him before this, Duchess? I don't know how we could have missed him, as I thought we saw everyone who boarded the steamer. I do believe he is the finest-looking man on the boat. Oh, Duchess, how wonderful you would look together. Wouldn't it be glorious if you would fall in love with each other?"

"Elynor, Elynor child, what are you talking about? What put such nonsense in your head? My heart is a sealed book. Don't you know, Elynor, that 'you can't write on paper that has already been written on.' Don't worry about me, I am as happy as I ever expect to be; my one purpose now is to devote myself to humanity. I have put love out of my life and mean to help those who have been less fortunate than I in this world's goods.

"You had better dress now, Elynor; I want you to make yourself as attractive as possible; you know you may see your Prince Charming again."

Elynor laughed acquiescence and went into her room. When she came out the duchess stared at her in amazement.

"Elynor, where did you get that pretty frock? Why I never saw you look like that before. Ah, ha! I think somebody has fallen in love. You may wear my pearls, they will suit your costume."

"Duchess, how well you understand me—I am so happy to-night," Elynor burst out gratefully.

CHAPTER II

The Mystery Girl

As they walked in to dinner the duchess saw Elynor's eyes eagerly glancing towards the captain's table, but she was destined to disappointment; the handsome officer was nowhere in sight. At a table on the opposite side of them a party of five were seated. The duchess was attracted to the girl in the group. A chance resemblance took her back many years and wonderingly she tried to remember where she had seen that face before. She searched about in her mind, but failed to recognize in the beautiful little queenly head with its short bobbed curls, any member of her social set. Glancing back at Elynor, it seemed almost the same face accentuated by the lines that age gradually brings.

Dinner was nearly finished when Elynor was attracted to the same group, but this time the man was holding her attention. He was drinking heavily and making himself offensive to the others at the table, who showed their displeasure by leaving. The woman, whom Elynor judged to be his wife, behaved shamelessly. Her gown was one of those flimsy affairs that were the fashion of the day, and if she had not been so alluring with her soft, confiding air and her kittenish manner, her actions would have been the height of vulgarity.

Everybody was relieved when the couple left the salon. Elynor and the duchess took a promenade on

the deck. The night was glorious, the vessel was sailing along under a blue sky studded with stars. The air was balmy and they both felt the joy of living on this flawless night at sea. As they rounded the deck, Elynor saw her hero of the afternoon. She grasped the duchess quickly by the arm and called her attention to the silent figure sharply outlined against the sky as he stood at the rail gazing out over the sea.

The duchess started, so sudden and unexpected was the apparition. She purposely walked closer to the figure to attract his attention. He turned sharply and in the moonlight his face was like a cameo. The features were clear cut and a closely trimmed beard, which covered the lower part of his face, characterized him a Frenchman.

An illustrious hero who had distinguished himself in the war. Conspicuously standing out from the rest of his decorations was the *croix de guerre*. His glance rested on Elynor, and to the duchess who knew what that little figure meant to him walking beside her so quietly and modestly, his eyes told volumes. To Elynor they simply expressed a new interest. He bowed slightly and the figure seemed to remain motionless; the face expressed that it was reverence for women that brought forth the courteous show of good breeding. They passed on and when the duchess glanced at Elynor she again saw that the blood had colored and warmed into life the face that had grown impassive to an emotion which had ceased to be a part of her life.

They decided to retire early, as the duchess had asked Elynor to tell her some of the incidents of her early life the following morning. She explained

to Elynor that they would exchange confidences and in that way would be able to pass the time very nicely together without feeling the need of the companionship of strangers in whom they had no interest.

The duchess had already retired and Elynor was dozing when they heard a disturbance in the suite opposite theirs. It sounded as though a struggle were taking place. The duchess had awakened with a start. "Elynor, are you awake?" she called.

"What was that noise?"

"I don't know, I am afraid something has happened," Elynor whispered, and then to their straining ears came these words, spoken in a shrill, but subdued voice.

"I will do just as I please about it. No, I won't give you the letter—I'm going to keep it. I tell you I won't," and then in lower tones the voice of a man strangled with rage.

"If you don't give me that letter, I'll wring your neck, you drunken little fool. What do you mean by making a scene this hour of the night. Do you want to disgrace me."

"Disgrace you?" she answered. "You made such a beast of yourself to-night that we won't be able to go into the dining room any more."

"What about you?" he answered. "You were absolutely shameless. All the rouses on the steamer were following you about, and you were playing up to them; you were doing it to attract the attention of that boy that has been ogling you since we came aboard. Give me that letter, you little fiend. I tell you, you shan't read it."

"I won't, I won't, I won't. If you come any closer I'll scream and arouse the passengers!"

After these words—silence. The duchess and Elynor could not go to sleep and about an hour later they again heard the girl sobbing bitterly.

“You little fool, I was trying to spare you,” came the voice of the man. “Why did you read the letter? Go to sleep. I’ll talk to you in the morning.”

It was the end of sleep for the duchess. When daybreak came her eyes closed wearily. Something clutched at her heart. She knew that the morrow would bring tragedy.

CHAPTER III

Marie Discovers She Has Been Deceived

"There is no use weeping and wailing." The words were swept into the duchess' room through the porthole in the corridor. "The thing is done, you can't go back home—your folks will not receive you. The best I can do for you is get you a position in a dance-hall; you are very pretty and I've found you do not hesitate to smoke, and when you drink you are adorable. You have no scruples against making a display of yourself and with your baby-blue eyes and golden hair I must admit you are very enticing. You should be a wonderful success in this age of jazz and froth."

"I have no fear for your future. Women of your type don't want a home; motherhood is a burden and you will find plenty more like me who will pick you up. You will go on until the end of time and your kind will reproduce themselves again and again. The world is full of Magdalens and it will only acclaim you as long as your beauty lasts. If you had not found those letters from my wife, I would have taught you many things."

"It was unfortunate that Johnny got sick and his mother struck a long-forgotten cord in my heart, and as a result of my absent-mindedness, the letter fell into your hands. Why, of course, the marriage was a farce—you don't imagine a real priest would have married us? Now come on, little girl, brace up.

Why, I didn't think you would take it that way. Don't cry so—I'll try to make things all right. I am honestly sorry I made such a mess of it for you. You were so beautiful I just couldn't resist. I haven't always given way to my fancy. Perhaps that nice boy who has been following you about might be interested in you. Too bad he saw you so reckless—I'm sorry I let you drink in public."

For a few moments a dead silence. By this time Elynor had dressed and entered the duchess' room.

"Isn't it a dreadful thing," she exclaimed. "What are we going to do. That poor girl seems to be in terrible trouble; how I should love to help her, but we dare not interfere." Elynor was interrupted by the plaintive tone of the girl.

"Yes," came the voice, "I have suspected for a long time that something was wrong. After I read that letter last night the bitterness of death was in my heart. If it were not for my dear parents I would have cast myself into the sea when I found that by dope and deception you had made me the plaything of an hour. When your passion would die I would lose the right to love. I remember the night you took me away; I wandered about the house all day gazing at the things which I know now I shall never see again, and my greatest regret was to leave dear little Billy behind. I felt as though I wanted to open the cage and set him free, but even he was wiser than I. Oftentimes I opened the door, but he would only perch himself on the opening, stick his little head out, and gaze about in a pert way. Instinct told him that 'freedom' and 'the world' were not for him. He knew enough to stay in his cage where loving hands fed and cared for him. He swelled his

little throat with joyous songs—and to think that from him I learned all the little trills that helped to fashion the divine gift which I possess, yet could not comprehend the greatest lesson he offered. Had I been as wise as Billy-bird and stayed in my feathered nest, he and I would both be intoning a note of gladness instead of—”

And then the man's voice broke in upon the plaint of the girl. “Great God! Cut out your driveling—that won't mend matters. Let's talk it over sensibly. Come, get up and dress, have some breakfast, take a walk in the fresh air, and when you are feeling better we will have a long talk.”

“If you promise to give up smoking, stop drinking, put on respectable clothes, I might consider marrying you. My wife will be glad to get rid of me; I haven't made her much of a husband. There's a charm about you that may hold me.”

“No, no!” she cried, “I can't trust you. This is only another one of your passionate outbursts. You are sorry for me. You think I have forgotten the incident the day you pretended to marry me. We were having lunch at the road house when I whispered my great secret into your ear. You threw me away from you as if an adder had stung you. The next day you took me to a doctor; you told me it would be necessary for me to take the proper precautions for my health in order to safeguard the valuable life which had been given into my keeping.”

“What happened in the doctor's office? You know better than I. I was desperately ill and had no one to go to. I did not dare tell mother. The knowledge of my wrong would have killed her. When you persuaded me to leave home, I went willingly, hoping

that I was misjudging you, trying to believe that you loved me honestly."

"You aroused my suspicion the first time when I came on you unexpectedly and saw that baby's picture in your hand. You told me it was your baby brother. And then again when I found that woman's photograph in your traveling bag, I knew by the guilty look on your face that she was more than a cousin to you."

"All these things came to my mind when you asked me, the evening before we sailed, if I had heard from home. I knew there was something you were afraid of. And when you bought that revolver you did not have to tell me that you *thought* you saw my father. It was your guilty conscience making you more of a coward than you already were."

"I might have known that when you would not go to my parents and ask for their consent that it was something more than a difference in religious beliefs which made you act like a thief in the night. If you had loved me with that great, overwhelming love which you claimed, and which breaks down all barriers, you would have pleaded your cause with my father, and if he had still persisted in refusing, I at least could have left my home with my mother's kiss on my forehead even though her tears would dampen my cheeks."

"Stop drinking, indeed! You told me that after I have taken a few drinks you have to exercise all the control at your command to keep your hands off me—that I send the blood racing through your veins; you are again primitive man and that you would not exchange that moment for the throne of a king. You told me that in those moments no

power on earth could take you from me—and now you ask me to give up the only means I have to hold you. Your God is passion, and with passion no longer having dominion over you, and I no longer the object of that passion, I lose you!

“As for smoking,—Bah, everybody does it! My gowns are modest compared with some you admire. There aren’t any conventions any more among ‘modern women.’ I’m your product. You taught me all these things. You numbed my conscience. And now you want me to regain something that is forever lost. What a vile thing you are!

“Under your training I have developed such a craving for admiration that I know I should never be satisfied with the hum-drum existence that the so-called respectable wife must put up with. If I had children who would fill my life and I could recreate myself in forming their minds and fashioning their future, that would be different, but you have made that impossible.”

“That boy to whom you are so ready to turn me over is not of your kind. He is a gentleman—you are not. I thought I had forgotten how to blush, but I know the first uncomfortable feeling I experienced was when I met that boy, face to face, when I was in no condition to be in the society of clean-minded people. I had expected that he would look on me with contempt, but I can still see the expression of compassion on his fine, spiritual face. And I’m just what I appear to be. You have branded me and placed me in the same category as the woman of the streets, and I have no hope that I shall ever again win the respect of my kind. You smile sarcastically, but you know it’s all true. Some day you, too, will pay!”

The man waited a few moments and then said: "Well, now that the tirade is over, I think I'll go into the smoking room and give you a chance to get yourself together. Apparently you've sense enough to accept the only way out. When you've decided what part you want me to play in the game, just let me know." A door slammed as he went out.

The bell rang sharply and the voice of the girl gave a command to the stewardess in an imperious tone.

CHAPTER IV

Marie Finds a Champion

The duchess lay awake and had no alternative but to listen. She felt like dressing and going on deck, but the sky was overcast with a thick, heavy fog which enveloped the vessel, and with the constant warning note of the fog horn beating against her brain, and the exhaustion which the sleepless night had brought on, she was so weary and languid that she found it an effort to raise her head. "Duchess," said Elynor, "I think we had better see the chief steward and ask him to change our suite. We will get no rest to-night with these people as neighbors. I am sorry the weather is so unfavorable this morning; however, I think it would be better if you went on deck. The atmosphere is positively stifling and since the sad feature has been eliminated and the girl evidently means to take up the life that he has planned for her, we would be wasting our sympathy on her, so I suggest we find a secluded corner and spend as much of the time alone to-day as we can."

At this moment Lucy came in and Elynor left the duchess in her care and went on deck to find a sheltered corner where they would not be disturbed by any of the other passengers.

When the duchess arrived on deck, Elynor had the steamer chairs arranged and had ordered breakfast. Many of the passengers were in the dining salon and a few taking their early morning walk on that part of the deck which was enclosed and shel-

tered from the mists hanging heavily over the steamer.

"Elynor, dear, after breakfast, after you have told me all about yourself, I will tell you some of the incidents concerning myself which no doubt you will be glad to hear," the duchess remarked.

They had just finished breakfast when Elynor saw the duchess look with some interest into the library, of which she commanded a full view from the position in which the steward had placed her chair. The room was empty when they sat down and Elynor, who was facing the duchess, seeing the look of interest on her face, turned her head and saw a handsome young man seated in the deep embrasure of a high-back chair engrossed with a letter he was reading. The duchess laughed and said, "Elynor, did you think that I saw your Prince Charming?"

"Oh, no, Duchess," she answered, and blushed prettily. "Your face is so expressive that I could not help reading the look of interest in your eyes, but he is a fine-looking boy. He reminds me of some one I know."

After the steward had removed the tray, Elynor began her story, but was interrupted by a clear, beautiful soprano voice, filled with pathos and carried out by the wailing wind as an accompaniment to the notes of despair, into the wastes ahead of them. It seemed one long continuous refrain of a breaking heart. The sighing wind drowned the words of the song. Again Elynor saw on the face of the duchess a startled, wondering, puzzled expression.

"Elynor," she said, "look quickly—you don't mean to tell me that's the little girl who occupies the suite next to ours—that divine voice, that pa-

thetic little figure. No, no, it is impossible! Wait, Elynor, don't turn around. The boy is deeply affected. What can it mean? She is leaving the piano, she is sobbing bitterly. Elynor, we have misjudged her. She is only a baby. I think I will go to her. I am so sorry that we misunderstood. We must try and help her. I see it all now. Her rebellion is all broken. That miserable wretch of a man!"

Elynor turned, and was about to rise, but seeing that the girl, who evidently thought she was alone, had crossed over to the extreme end of the salon, and thrown herself on the divan, and that the boy had crossed over to the piano, Elynor sank back into her seat. And then the piano answered the girl's cry for a champion in this, the hour of her abandonment. The little drama worked itself out under their eyes. The girl was no longer alone; the soul of the boy had answered the call. What was he playing? The "Swan Song" from "Lohengrin."

The girl raised her head—a new light was in her face—two souls had been united and made as one.

The girl slipped from the room; the duchess' eyes were full of tears; a feeling of gladness and understanding dawned on Elynor. The duchess' face had told the story. The problem of the girl was solved, a champion had arisen to fight her battle with the spirit of evil.

The duchess sighed happily as she said: "Elynor, you may tell me the story now. My mind is clear, I am almost happy—I had no idea that I felt so keenly for the girl."

"Duchess, I, too, am very, very happy. There has been a strange longing in my heart to help this

child, and I know now that there will be something we can do. This man, no doubt, will arrange to get rid of her, and we can take her under our protection and in that way perhaps while she is abroad her marvelous voice can get the finish that will eventually lead her into the right path and give her the opportunity to raise herself out of the mire that this unscrupulous man has thrust her in.

“And now my life’s story.”

CHAPTER V

The Death of Elynor's Mother

"My mother was raised in a convent. She was a quiet, unobtrusive child, and the sisters were good to her. She helped prepare the food and did many things to make herself useful. When she was eighteen she was sent out into the world and lived with a family as housekeeper. She was not happy in that household, for the son of the house had fallen madly in love with her, constantly forcing his attentions upon her and arousing the displeasure of his parents. Finally she was compelled to leave the house, and he followed. Alone in the world—without a name—her only consolation her faith and trust in God, she finally listened to the tempting and bright future this young man painted."

"She married him and they were happy for a time, but it hurt her bitterly that he scoffed at religion and sneered at the symbolism of her faith. It seemed that he was almost jealous of her God and she was compelled to steal away without his knowledge to church. He began to drink heavily; by this time my brother was born. A year later I came into the world. After I had grown to understand, my mother tried to teach me to revere the Creator, but my father's paganism upset all my tendencies for good. My brother was a wild, reckless boy.

"My mother feared my father, and one day when she heard him coming up the steps as she was reading

her prayer-book to me, she quickly closed it and slipped it under the bed-clothes. I didn't understand why my mother was so secretive, and if she had such intense faith in God, why was it that she feared father so? But one day the entire thing became clear to my childish brain; the question was answered, though not in the way I had expected.

"I heard father coming up the steps; I could tell by his unsteady walk that he had been drinking. Mother had just come in from church, and had not time to put away the things which she had in her hands. She set a bottle on the mantle, but held something in her hand; I didn't know what it was. Father staggered into the room, grabbed mother by the arm, twisted her wrist, and the object she held in her hand fell to the floor.

" 'I saw you buy that damned thing,' he said, crushing it under his heel."

"He lurched over to the mantle—took the bottle from the shelf, and struck my mother on the temple with it. The bottle broke in his hand."

" 'There's your cursed holy water,' he shouted. The shock of the thing he had done, sobered him; he looked in horror at mother, whose blood was streaming down her face; then he rushed from the house like a madman. She dragged herself over to the object he had crushed on the floor, picked up the two parts of the cross, handed them to me, and said, 'My daughter, remember how your mother died. This is the heritage I leave to you. Be good to your brother, forgive your father. He was not responsible, and say with me as Our Lord did, "Forgive them, Father, they know not what they do."'"

"Before we buried my mother, my father had dis-

appeared and we went to live with the Markleys', distant cousins of father's. Mrs. Markley held very orthodox views. She had a son, whom she raised in the strict, orthodox fashion. This was strange to us, because we had never known of any other religion but our own, and the beauty of the ceremonials and the sanctity of that home made me look for a more complete and thorough knowledge of such a concept of religious life. To this woman I owed the higher ideals struggling for supremacy in my being. I often asked myself if it were a hereditary trait handed down to me by generations of scoffers that made it impossible for me to see the light in all its splendor. Would my father's unbelief destroy the teachings of my mother—and was the evil predominating over the good?

“Duchess, I was a very unruly child. Mrs. Markley was very good to me, but I knew that she did not love me and seemed annoyed when Michael paid me much attention. I heard her telling Michael one day that I had a dual personality. Of course, this was true in a way. At times, I was sweet and confiding and longed to put my arms around her and tell her how grateful I was for giving my brother and myself a home; but at other times the longing for my own dear mother was so overwhelming that I could not help but feel that Mrs. Markley's kindness was but a phase of her naturally generous attitude towards humanity. Her great mother-love was all for Michael, and I knew that we had no share in that love, and so when I was morose and in an ugly mood she treated me in like manner, and it was not until a few years had passed that I felt I had won her over to thinking more kindly of me.

“My brother was such a lazy, shiftless boy, and of such mediocre intelligence, that Michael and his mother disliked him heartily. He neglected every task assigned him, would not work at anything steadily, and the only time he seemed to make a little money was when he was working in a saloon nearby. There he got all the liquor he wanted for nothing and formed the terrible habit that later destroyed him completely.”

CHAPTER VI

Elynor's Brother Disappears

"Mrs. Markley was talking with Michael one day and I heard her say that it would be necessary to find another home for the boy, that she could not influence him for good and he was only demoralizing me and making us all unhappy in the home. Michael was afraid that I would be deeply wounded if he sent my brother away and was very much perplexed with the problem, which was rather hard to solve, but finally my brother solved it for him. He disappeared from home, and although we made every effort to get news of him, we never heard from him again. We—"

"Yes, Elynor," the duchess interrupted, "Maurice Gilbert would often come to me and relate many of the incidents pertaining to your home, as Michael and he were boyhood friends. He loved Mrs. Markley very dearly, and he was a constant visitor at Michael's home and told me of the day on which a letter came when you were introduced into their household."

"Elynor, I am going to tell you the result of that letter, so that you will understand better the feelings of love and friendship which were awaiting you upon your arrival."

"When Mrs. Markley had finished reading the letter concerning you, the tears were coursing down her cheeks, and she handed the letter to Michael.

He read it through and then said, 'Mother, you can do as you like about it, of course, but my sympathies are with the children. I think it would be nice for you to take them into our home, now that they are motherless. They would be great company for you, and while I am away at college you would not have to be alone.'

"I remember when Maurice came home and I happened to be visiting his mother that day. He seemed very much excited, because you and your brother had arrived, and he dwelt at length on you, describing you as the most beautiful little girl he had ever seen. His mother smiled at his enthusiasm, and when asked where he got that mark on his face he told her that Michael had gotten into a fight with some boys in the street and that during the battle Michael's shirt opened and the boys caught sight of a prayer shawl he was wearing. Of course Maurice recognized this bit of wearing apparel, but the other boys did not, and when they began to jeer at Michael, Maurice entered into the fight. It seemed that later in the evening the boys, still incensed against Michael, learned that his family was going to celebrate a religious feast at their home that night, and as Michael had been victorious in the fight, they, boy-like, awaited an opportunity to punish him in some way. They thought it would be great fun to interrupt the dinner. Maurice happened to be standing there when the little rogues formulated this plan. He decided that he might be able to dissuade them from carrying out their wicked design so he went with them to the house."

"They all crept stealthily up to the window and peered in, and seemed taken aback at the scene. The dining room was brilliantly lighted, and all of

the members of the family were garbed in white, and at this particular moment they were all standing with wine cups in their hands."

"Michael's father reminded Maurice of pictures of the great prophet Abraham, with his long, flowing beard, and wrapped in the white holy garments of the high priest of Israel. The boys wore prayer scarfs and seemed a little frightened. When they had finally shut the door and sat down at the table, Maurice saw Michael's father's lips move. Michael looked under the table. Maurice wondered what he expected to find there."

" 'I saw a picture like that hanging up in the church when I went to mass the other morning with mother, but there were no girls in that picture,' said one of the little boys.

" 'Oh, come on, fellers, let's go,' said another, and it seemed to Maurice that, as young as they were, they left in a different spirit from which they came."

"Maurice went home to his mother and told her what he saw. He asked her if she wouldn't please celebrate that way, too, and she promised that the following year she would ask the rabbi to invite some of the young men who were preparing for the pulpit to take part in this feast so they could keep the tradition of our fathers. Maurice told his mother that he was worried; that maybe some day the expected Messiah would come and they would have nothing in the house to refresh Him with. The Passover Feast then became an annual celebration in their home.

"Years went on—Maurice went to college and Michael was training for the rabbinate. When Maurice came home for his vacation, each time his mother

related a new misfortune that befell the Markley family. All the children had died except Michael, and when he was about to take his degree as rabbi, his father passed away. Maurice remembered Michael's extraordinary devotion to his dear little mother, and a year later, when his own mother died, he became a daily visitor at their home. In this way he learned much of the teachings of Judaism, which he had only received in a perfunctory way at the weekly service. He was ashamed to confess that most of the time he was very much bored, and not having had any instructions in the Hebrew language, when they took out and read the passages from the Ten Commandments in Hebrew, he invariably slipped out of the temple. He would never go to his mother's pew for this reason and would always take an inconspicuous seat so he could leave without observation or disturbing the service. How he envied Michael's thorough knowledge of literature. Michael was a brilliant scholar and was conversant with every tongue that was spoken. In addition to this, he had a master mind. Much of the knowledge that Maurice possesses to-day he owes to his intimate association with this early friend of his childhood."

CHAPTER VII

Dr. Isaac M. Wise

"When Michael finished college and came home to take up his work and establish himself in his community, you had developed and added to the beauty of your person the expansion of your mind, Elynor, and Maurice said that it was a very simple matter to one who knew you both to see how dear you had become to one another. I remember Maurice calling at your home one day and how deeply he was affected when he found Mrs. Markley in tears. She complained to him that Michael was always finding fault with her, and that he no longer loved her as he did in his boyhood days. The suspicion was growing that you were responsible for the change. A great fear had now taken possession of her that Michael meant to marry you, and she told Maurice although she had learned to love you, that you were not as frank with her as she would have liked you to be and that she came upon you very often and found you in tears, and at those moments you had some object which you hastily slipped into your bosom."

"Yes, Duchess," said Elynor. "I should have told Mrs. Markley the truth, that it was not the two parts of the cross that were influencing me and discrediting her teachings, but that the tears were for my dear mother and her unhappy end. The broken cross was simply a relic of the only thing she had to leave me out of the dark past."

"Then, too, Duchess, she was very much worried about Michael, whom she feared would take charge of a Reform pulpit, and I know that would have broken her heart, as many of the ceremonials had ceased to be a part of the service, and, of course, she knew that eventually Michael would begin to live the things he preached."

"But Michael, respecting the views of his noble father, and not wishing to hurt the loving heart of his mother, compromised by accepting the charge of the conservative congregation. Instead of being criticized for this by the founders of the orthodox synagogue, they encouraged and helped him carry on the work by sending him their children to teach and prepare them for the broader outlook that the enlightened world was slowly beginning to perceive—that in order to love his brother one must first of all understand him. Michael knew, that no matter what social demands the complex life of the cities called for, the fires of enthusiasm must be kept alive by the ritual in the home, the Sabbath day held holy, and all festivals religiously followed so that when the call came where materialism could play no part and the divine will would have full sway, they would be ready to meet any emergency that might arise from a religious or political controversy. In the battle waged between the idealist and the materialist, the idealist carries off the honors and he lives forever and his entire empire is lasting. The materialist, although gaining the spoils, enjoys the fruits of his conquests but for a little while.

"I remember one day when Mrs. Markley was explaining to me the differences between orthodoxy, conservatism, and reform, she agreed that

the only congregation which could closely follow the teachings of the law of Moses would be the conservative synagogue, as she, too, knew that, since the new generations would feel that Hebrew was too difficult as a part of the curriculum in the institutions of learning, gradually the English language would have to interpret the teachings of Judaism and therefore she was very happy when Michael's choice fell upon the conservative synagogue."

"In discussing the situation, Michael explained to me that with the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and the scattering of the children of Israel into the four corners of the earth, and particularly in America, where the language was strange and the customs new, the so-called 'Melting Pot' became the only key to the situation, and the conservative synagogue made possible a perpetuation of the faith."

"Knowing that in order to sustain the ideal in Judaism, it was necessary to prepare the adolescent mind, not only to receive, but to understand the teachings of the prophets, in order to perpetuate and keep alive the spark which our fathers received embodied in the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, the idea of the need of meeting the problem of the day was born."

"Michael had brilliant prospects for the future, as his learning covered a wide range, and with the fundamental principles of religion deeply instilled into him from early childhood, the foundation and the corner-stone were laid on a solid basis to receive any structure that would meet the needs of the period. Orthodoxy was too extreme and had too many dogmas to be of value to the child in its early development, and particularly in America, which became the

shelter-house for the mixed population which poured into it from all parts of the world. These children of different beliefs and racial instincts met in the streets and schoolrooms and it was necessary to organize them into useful citizens, so that the love of country and the love of home would be the basis on which they would found their principles of social and political life."

"I think, Duchess, that had Michael consulted his own inclination, he would have preferred a Reformed pulpit, since his admiration and reverence for the divine leader, Isaac M. Wise, was boundless.

"I recall particularly an incident which proved to me his great love for this kindly and meek man. Michael had returned to spend the New Year with his mother. One of his former classmates who was in his senior year at the Hebrew Union College, was asked to call at Dr. Wise's country home to receive instructions and advice as to how to proceed in conducting a congregation for the holiday season in a small town and asked Michael to accompany him. As you know, Duchess, I had been teaching in the Sabbath school and knew Dr. Wise, and so when Michael offered to make me one of the party, I very happily accepted. As I had some curiosity to know what the personal side of this great man's life was, you can imagine the joy in my heart when we walked up the country road towards his home on that glorious fall day."

"When we entered his study, we felt it almost an intrusion, as Dr. Wise at this particular hour was posing for Sir Moses Ezekiel, who had come on from Rome and was sculptoring his bust. He very graciously excused himself from Sir Ezekiel and told him the

nature of our visit. To me, Duchess, that great soul was revealed by this act of apparent humbleness on the part of this, the greatest man of the age and century.

"He greeted me with these words: 'And so you still remember me?'

" 'Remember you, doctor?'—I faltered—'who can and will ever forget you? When all animate things have died, you, Dr. Wise, will live, and in you and through you, the God and the good in man will survive.'

"Doctor, we are going to put your name on the doorposts of our homes and we will keep your teachings as frontlets between our eyes; and as for your love, those of us who have been fortunate enough to know you will feel that your hand raised in benediction over us—has consecrated us to carry on the work which you perfected in spite of bitter opposition on the part of those who were so blinded by bigotry that they failed to see that you had solved the problem for the new generations that will carry your banner into all parts of the world.'

" 'Listen to the child,' he said. 'You sweet, beautiful girl; you speak like a prophetess.'

"Dr. Wise turned to his young disciple and gave him instructions about the work he was to do, and then, in a low tone, which reached our ears faintly, asked him if he had money to defray his expenses for the journey. Upon being told that the youth had no funds, Dr. Wise wrote out a check. The young man wanted to give Dr. Wise a receipt, but the doctor laughingly refused to accept it, and said, 'My boy, when I give anyone money, I give him a receipt at the same time.'

"Although this was not intended for us, I hastily wiped away the tears that I didn't want Dr. Wise to see, and when I turned to Michael, I found that his eyes, too, were dimmed.

"Going down the road Michael told us of some of the incidents in the life of that other great man, Dr. Schechter, of the Theological Seminary in New York, and particularly stressed the apparently insignificant details which great men seem to take such joy in."

"Michael had been called to the Catskills to do some work for Dr. Schechter, who was summering there with his wife, and when Michael was announced, he found this dreamer surrounded by a group of children with whom he was dividing two jars of candy, and the boyish pleasure he took in keeping the little ones in suspense as to who was going to get the largest share, was very amusing. Who would have thought that this great scholar could divert himself in what would appear a trivial way to those of ordinary intelligence?"

CHAPTER VIII

Michael's Mother Objects

"Yes, Elynor, Sir Gilbert told me that Michael never permitted you to be out of his sight for a moment when he was home—that he took you into his confidence at all times and would not act upon a vital matter without first consulting you, and when finally he finished his studies and became head of an influential congregation, you became a very valuable assistant to him, because, having taught you Hebrew, you were especially helpful in the Sabbath school, and the children not only loved you, but you were successful in forming their young minds."

"Sir Gilbert also said that Michael's mother often resented the fact that he always defended you when she found the slightest fault with you. Gradually a little friction arose between Michael and his mother, and she accepted in pained silence his sharp rebukes and tried to trace the little troubles that were now becoming a daily menace to the peace and happiness of their home. It appeared that you were always at the root of the trouble. When Michael was not around, Mrs. Markley showed a growing dislike and hostility toward you, and Michael forced the climax by the bantering tone he assumed when Mrs. Markley became bitterly incensed against you on that Friday evening when you became engaged to Michael."

"Elynor, dear, I am going to tell you what occurred before you appeared on the scene. I knew

you never quite understood why Michael should have asked you to marry him at what seemed such an inopportune moment. While his words in a way explained, still I am sure the little details will bring you some comfort and happiness in your loneliness now."

"On that Friday afternoon Mrs. Markley had left the house for a little time to buy some Sabbath candles. Before leaving, she covered up the Sabbath loaf carefully. Dusk had fallen when she returned and she hastily lit the candles and said the blessing over them, when she heard Michael come in. She went to the pantry to get the bread and it was gone. She thought perhaps you had put it elsewhere and felt resentful that you had touched the sacred loaf. She did not believe as thoroughly as Michael that you were happy in the faith which was his. In her shrewd way she guessed that you loved Michael first and God afterwards."

"When she opened the door of the refrigerator the food she had prepared was gone. She looked inside again and could hardly believe her eyes; there was no evidence of anyone having entered the house in her absence and the only one who could have done this thing was you; but what on earth did you want with the food? She was standing looking into the refrigerator in a perplexed way when Michael came in, kissed her, and said: 'What's the matter, mother—what dreadful thing has happened now?'

"The tears welled to her eyes, and she said, 'Michael, since that girl came into this house, you no longer care for your mother.'

"'Mother!' answered Michael, 'you are very unfair to Elynor. You don't know how hard she tries

to make you love her. You are prejudiced against her and have no faith in her, and therefore you are ready to find fault at all times. I am sorry, mother; I wish you would try to understand her.

" 'Mother, I know you have noticed for a long time that I love Elynor; she has become a part of my life; she has fitted herself into my life so perfectly that it would be like tearing out my heart to cast her out.'

"His mother gave him a startled look. 'So this, my son, is the reward you give your poor mother for all the years of affection she lavished on you! You counseled me to take into my house a non-believer. If I had not followed your advice I would have my son to-day. If you marry her, I do not gain a daughter, I lose a son; she does not love me and never will!'

" 'Mother,' said Michael, 'she does; you don't trust her!'

"At that moment the front door opened and you came in. You looked tired; your eyes were red and it seemed you had been weeping. Somehow Michael felt that you had something to do with the disappearance of the food, and before his mother had a chance to say anything to you, he asked kindly, 'Elynor, where have you been?'

" 'Michael,' you answered, 'the people next door have just been ordered out of their home and they had no place to go, so I took them to the home of one of my Sabbath-school pupils, and they are going to remain there overnight only, for these people who took them in are very poor. They had no food in the house, so I came back here and took all I could find, knowing very well that mother wouldn't care when she knew that somebody was hungry.'

“Michael looked at you for a moment and a great lump rose in his throat, and he said, speaking for his mother, who was weeping, ‘Elynor, I have just been telling mother that I intend to make you my wife. I wanted her consent and blessing, and I am sure that we are both convinced that you will be a fitting mate for the man whose mother trained you. To-night’s incident proves to me that in living with my mother, a part of herself has entered into you, and if you will only learn to know each other I am sure this house will be truly blessed.’

“His mother understood, walked over to where you were standing, took your hand, and Michael’s, and joined them. Tenderly she kissed you both and you sat down to eat the remnants of the Sabbath feast. Mrs. Markley saw that you and Michael did not seem to notice that there was not much to eat, and she rose from the table with divided feelings, glad for her son that he was happy, sad for herself that she did not have great hope for any happiness in this union, because she knew that in order for the sacred bond between man and wife to be lasting, it was necessary that reciprocal confidence be complete, and woman-like, she knew intuitively that you were hiding something from all of them. You were married shortly after this.”

“Michael and you established yourselves in a cozy little home and Michael was supremely happy, but gradually he felt that you were not quite the same after you had been married about three months. You were nervous and irritable, and for the first time since he had known you, you answered him sharply and he noticed that when he talked to you about his work at the temple there was a look of terror on

your face which he found impossible to explain away. One day he came to Sir Gilbert and said, 'Sir Gilbert, you and Elynor have been very close friends; did she at any time tell you of some secret trouble of which I am not aware? Do you know if she has gotten in touch with her brother and whether he has done anything that could upset and disturb her so?' Sir Gilbert told him he knew of absolutely nothing that could bring about this great change in you. Sir Gilbert advised Michael to speak to his mother, as possibly you would make a confidant of her, if she tried to draw you out on the subject."

"Michael went to his mother and had a long talk with her and I think it was due to this conversation that gradually he began to watch you more closely. On several occasions he came home rather unexpectedly and found you in a state of collapse. He was beginning to be genuinely alarmed; the wear and tear of this new home problem was telling on his health and he began to neglect much of his work, which had made him such a leader in his congregation."

"He came home from Bible class early one evening. You were in your night-clothes, and although you were standing with your back to him as he entered, he caught your reflection in the glass. You were holding something in your hand and weeping bitterly. His suspicions were confirmed—it must be a letter from your brother. He gave you an opportunity to collect yourself and spoke cheerily to you."

"About a week later he was called out of the city to a funeral in a neighboring town, and as he did not know at what hour he would return, he told you not to wait up for him. He came into the house in a rather sad frame of mind; the scene in the death

chamber had been very harrowing—the wife had cried out against God, and flung her protest against the injustice of man. It seemed that in this awful crisis in their wedded life she was not only robbed of her husband, but also of her faith in him.”

“Michael made as little noise as possible in entering; the reception hall was dark and the bed chamber, with its subdued light, looked almost weird. He took a step forward and then suddenly stopped. He felt his blood congeal at the sight he beheld. You, his Elynor, the girl whom he had worshipped and adored—the girl for whom he had sacrificed his own hearth—you were on your knees at the bedside in an attitude of prayer, your face covered with tears—your golden hair flowing over your shoulders, and in your hands, you were holding aloft a cross, and crying aloud, ‘Mother, mother, I am all alone—I have no one who loves and understands me in this great hour when I need you most.’ As you raised your head, you saw Michael’s white, tense face in the mirror. You shrieked in agony and knew at that moment that you had lost your husband.’



MICHAEL AND ELYNOR'S WEDDING

CHAPTER IX

Sorrow and Joy

“Michael rushed from the house like a madman. By this time the city was in darkness. He wandered about the greater part of the night, and when he became more calm he came to Sir Gilbert’s home and told him what had happened. Sir Gilbert begged him to consider well what he was doing and to talk to you before taking any step which would perhaps destroy and ruin any hopes of reconciliation between you, but Michael assured him that it would be utterly impossible for him to approach you on the subject and make an effort to take up his life with you again; that you had completely destroyed, not only his faith in you, but in himself. How could he hope to influence and help his fellow men if he had failed so completely in regulating his own affairs at home? If you, to whom he gave that love, which is the strongest factor in human life—and in which lies the hope of all salvation—failed to bring him in return constancy and devotion—how could he hope to give counsel in affairs which concerned the lives of other people? Evidently his love for you had been his greatest weakness, for he was blinded by this self-same love to your own imperfections which he now realized his dear mother had tried to point out to him. He saw now that her knowledge and understanding of human nature was superior to his. Her bitter experiences and unhappy losses had brought a complete under-

standing of the complexities of the human mind—the full significance of her warning note throughout his entire defense of you, Elynor, was brought home to him. His mother had a feeling that there was something wrong—she tried to advise him—to point out to him the danger of a possible misunderstanding and the great disaster that would follow, if what she feared, actually happened, but he was deaf to her entreaties and attributed it all to bigotry in matters concerning religious affairs.”

“He could not and would not face his mother; he could not bear to discuss you with her; he feared the bitter things she would say of you. You had shattered his dream of happiness—that is true, but you were still his ideal-girl—the only woman in the world who could make him happy and be the mother of his children. No, he would not see his mother; he made arrangements with Sir Gilbert to turn over a fund whereby you and his mother would be cared for and asked him to keep his secret and to tell his mother that a dreadful calamity had fallen upon him—that in losing you, nothing more mattered—that he was going away and that she should see that you wanted for nothing.

“He sent in his resignation to the congregation—remained with Sir Gilbert until he had put his affairs in order and promised to write Sir Gilbert and keep him informed of his whereabouts.”

Then Elynor took up the story:

“Yes, Duchess, Sir Gilbert called on me shortly after this and tried to effect a reconciliation and I told him the spectre that stood between Michael and myself could be discussed with no one but my husband. He was gone, so upon me devolved the

burden of taking up the threads of my life and bringing to fruition the great trust that God had given into my keeping."

"Duchess, my child was about to be born; Michael did not know that I was to become a mother—I was afraid to tell him this wondrous thing. I was torn with anxiety that my offspring would be born crippled in body, mind, and soul. I had heard that in cases of heredity there is always a lapse of a generation when the inherent evil asserts itself again, and so I fancied that alcohol would give me a blind baby—that irreligion would give me a scoffer—that the crime of my father would make my child a dwarf, and so, Duchess, when Michael left and I awakened to consciousness, I spent most of the time on my knees. One day came my baby—my lovely, beautiful, little Lura Hope, and, Duchess, all my fears were groundless. The kindly Father had sent me a gift in which was embodied all the graces, for looking over the years as you and I are doing to-day, you know what that girl stands for, and to me, Duchess, the years brought peace and joy and happiness, for in the child's large, beautiful, brown eyes was imprisoned the soul of my Michael—in her beautiful, burnished, golden hair was the lighter tint of my Michael's—in the peach-blossom bloom of her cheek I recognized the dreams of my Michael."

As Elynor finished speaking the tears were softly coursing down her cheeks—she closed her eyes—the Duchess glanced up—slowly a hand descended on Elynor's head—a cheek lay against her own—a kiss was imprinted on her eyes—Elynor felt a thrill

vibrate through her body—and—slowly—slowly she was lifted up and enfolded in the arms of her Michael.

Fortunately there was no one on deck to witness the scene that followed. Elynor opened her eyes, gasped, and lost consciousness. Michael carried her to his suite and the duchess followed. They waited in some anxiety until Elynor recovered consciousness. Michael remained in the background; he felt that the shock of the meeting had upset her sufficiently for the moment.

The duchess was kneeling at Elynor's side. Elynor smiled faintly and said: "Duchess, wasn't that a wonderful dream? I don't see how I could have confused Michael with the handsome officer, but it seemed to me, that when I finished speaking, I was in the officer's arms. The duchess answered: "Elynor, I have been trying to prepare you for this event since we boarded the steamer, but feared the result for you. It was no dream, Elynor—Michael and the distinguished man who made such an impression on you, are one and the same, and to you has come this great happiness, after the years of sorrow, loneliness, and despair, which you met and faced so bravely."

CHAPTER X

The Reckoning

“Duchess, you don’t really mean that this great, wonderful thing is true?” asked Elynor; “that I have not only found my Michael, but in him the new-born happiness which filled my being, when for the moment I thought it was only a dream?” Again Elynor closed her eyes.

The duchess nodded to Michael and this time neither of them feared any unhappy results for Elynor.

Michael whispered, “Elynor, darling, I have come back to you. It will not be necessary for me to ask forgiveness; the great soul of you divined why I left you—you knew there could be no happiness for us until the realization came to me that love levels all barriers. Later, when you have recovered sufficiently to listen to the adventures of my life for the past twenty years, you will know how your Michael suffered, and through suffering was purged and came to know that one God rules over us all.”

“I am sure the duchess will want some luncheon and later in the day we will again take up the subject so near to our hearts. I have a great surprise for you. Had you remained in America a few days longer and received her letters, our little daughter would have forestalled me in the joy of the tale that I am going to relate to you, of how she and I met and how she nursed me back to health, hope, and happiness.

"When I arrived in America, Mother told me all that transpired during my absence, but she left the personal touches for you to add. I am interested in the trip you took to Japan, where you found your unhappy brother."

Turning to the duchess, he said: "Duchess, how can Elynor and I ever repay you for all that you and your dear sister, the Lady Lura, have done for me and mine? It was with great pride that I learned that my little girl bears the name of your talented and benevolent sister, and I am sure that she can be proud that my Lura Hope is her namesake. The story reads like a romance, Duchess, and to you, the bountiful Lady Jessica, with the regal carriage and charm of a Cleopatra of old, is befitting the role of the guardian angel."

The duchess colored at this pretty compliment, and responded: "I see, Colonel, that added to all your many other distinguished qualities, the gift of appealing to the vanity of the ever-feminine is a distinct feature. I thank you heartily in behalf of my sister and myself. I will leave you now for a little while, but you have made a very bad beginning—you are returning evil for good. You have robbed me of my secretary and I know I shall spend lonely hours now, for despite Elynor's gratitude, I shall be thrown on my own resources, because the outstanding feature in her life now, and the constant word on her lips, will be 'Michael'—my 'Michael,' and again 'Michael.' However, I presume I shall have to be content to remain in the background and for the time being, eclipse myself and find contentment in shining by reflection. I know you have much to say to each other, so I will leave you now."

"Duchess, I have arranged with the captain to have you and Elynor dine at his table this evening and if you feel inclined to rest for the afternoon and do not wish to be disturbed, it will give me great pleasure to escort you to dinner," said Michael.

"I shall be happy to accept the invitation," was the reply.

Although the duchess rejoiced in this great joy that had come to these unfortunate beings who had wasted the years in which joy and gladness could have played so big a part, she sadly went back to her suite and a great depression and sense of loneliness settled on her.

She was just a few years older than Elynor and a great longing was awakened in her to love and be loved—to again become a part of these big families of the universe—to live and bask in the sunshine and the love of a heart which was exclusively her own.

As these thoughts were flitting through her mind, she entered her cabin and found a note which her maid had just taken from the stewardess. She wondered who could have written it—opened it, and saw that it was from Sir Gilbert's nephew, asking for an interview. In her present lonely mood this provided a very happy touch, and eagerly she sent the answer with Lucy, summoning Harold to come to her immediately.

Harold lost no time in responding to the invitation. The duchess was greatly surprised to see that Harold was the youth who had so nobly championed the cause of "The Mystery Girl." She greeted him warmly and told him that she had received a letter from his uncle telling her that he was aboard the steamer.

"Duchess, I saw that you were in no mood to re-

ceive anyone this morning," said Harold. "Of course, I had no difficulty in identifying you, from the description my uncle gave me in his letter, and I noticed that you were observing me very closely, and fancied at first that you knew me, but later I saw that you seemed very much interested in that poor girl who seems to be having a sad time with her husband. I am heartily sorry for her. Several times in passing them, I heard him speak very rudely to her and I saw that they were not happily mated. I don't know what recalled the story to my mind of "Beauty and the Beast." I felt that this must be one of those ill-considered marriages that are man-made and not sanctioned by God. I have felt very sorry for that poor little thing; she seemed to me like some transplanted flower. I have seen her weeping bitterly, when she thought no one was taking any notice of her. I am so glad, Duchess, that you are interested; my uncle told me that you are always trying to alleviate distress wherever you find it and I noticed by the expression on your face this morning that she had found a friend in you, if the need came."

"Harold, my boy," said the duchess, "you and I are going to get on famously. We have started off with a topic that is of mutual interest, and I think you are going to find out in a day or two that you will be called upon to give more than mere sympathy to this child. I heard you play the 'Swan Song' and I think she feels that her 'Lohengrin' is going to champion her cause."

"Harold, my dear—my dear—that man is not her husband; he deceived her. He is a married man and has a family. They occupy the suite across the corridor and we are forced to listen to their conversa-

tion, as they generally start an argument at such an ungodly hour that even stuffing cotton in our ears doesn't keep out the sound," said the duchess in a careless tone. "I know, Harold, that you must think I am flippant to treat the matter so lightly, but conditions to-day are such that virtue has a fixed market value and I am afraid there are many who would be tempted to fall off the pedestal if sufficiently dazzled by the temptor, and particularly in this case where the child is really not to blame. Her greatest crime was that she did not go to her mother and tell her of the trouble that she was in."

The duchess noticed that as she was speaking, the boy grew pale—the eyes of dark, violet blue had grown intensely black, and that there was a look in them that boded ill for the man who had crushed this field flower so ruthlessly.

"Duchess, I hope you won't misunderstand me—I cannot explain this inner feeling which makes me wish I were her brother long enough to thrash the scoundrel and make him a public spectacle, so that he would not be able to mingle with the passengers. His presence is an insult to every self-respecting man and woman on board and I for one will voice my sentiments without hesitancy."

"Harold," the duchess said, "you must do your utmost to control your temper; you will do her more harm than good. You would injure her and gain nothing."

"Elynor Markley, whom you no doubt know of (as she is a good friend of your uncle's), to-day has been reunited to her husband, from whom she has been separated for the past twenty years. Elynor and I had planned, ere Colonel Markley made him-

self known, that we would watch the girl closely and come to her aid if necessary, so you leave the matter entirely in our hands and keep in the background. The man has already taunted her because you seem to be interested in her. He seems to love her in a sort of way, from what I gather from his conversation with her, and he would make it very unpleasant for you and her both, when in one of his ugly, jealous moods."

The sound of hurried footsteps broke in on their conversation and ended in the suite opposite. The duchess and Harold heard someone moving around. At that moment, the deck steward appeared in the doorway and handing the duchess a purse and a book, said, "Madame, you left these articles in your steamer chair." She thanked him and glanced at the book. "Oh, yes, I remember," she said to Harold, "I noticed Elynor had this book in her hand."

As the duchess opened the book, a letter fell to the floor and a small photograph of a man and a young girl slipped out of the letter. Harold picked it up and handed it to the duchess. She looked at it a moment and on her face, Harold read conflicting emotions—amazement—wonderment—incredulity—and as her bewilderment grew, she looked helplessly at Harold and handed him the photograph.

"Why, Duchess," said Harold, "it is the face of the girl we were just speaking of, but this girl has the carriage and the dignity of a little queen."

"Yes, Harold, I puzzled over the resemblance between Elynor and this stranger at dinner last night. This must be a portrait of Elynor when she was a girl. The resemblance is startling."

They were again interrupted by loud, angry voices,

coming apparently from the corridor. "So, young lady, you found it, did you? Now you give me that gun. You are driving me to desperation—you will make me do something that you will be sorry for later. Your avoidance of me all morning is making me desperate and if you don't give me that gun, by God—"

The girl said hysterically: "If you come another step towards me, I will fire. My decision is made—you leave this cabin at once, or I will go to the captain and place myself under his protection. I have thought it over carefully and I refuse to be the plaything of cowards like you any longer. From this day on, I take up a new life—I will beg if necessary and devote myself to the great art in which I now see lies my salvation. Yes, when I get to Paris I will go to live in the magic circle where idealists and dreamers give their lifeblood to fashion a career. If God will forgive me, I shall dedicate myself to his service, and if it be my good fortune to wash away with tears the stain you have put upon me, I will make amends by holding out a helping hand to those who have been betrayed by vipers like you."

"Ha! Ha!" he scoffed, "listen to Miss Puritan. So you are going to turn over a new leaf. By jove! that's good. Well, how do you think you are going to live? You think, my fine lady, I am going to let you keep the jewels I gave you? Not on your life—you hand them over to me right now, as long as you feel that way about it. I thought you were going to let me take care of you, but I guess you must have been talking to that boob, who no doubt will be my successor. Well, you won't take anything with you that I gave you and if he hasn't any more than you,

you'll make a fine pair. So he will take a hand-me-down, will he? Well, he's welcome, I have had enough of you."

"One word more," said the girl in a shrill tone, "and it will be your last."

The duchess and the boy stood as if they were petrified—they heard a struggle and suddenly three shots rang out in quick succession. The boy sprang forward and stopped short in the doorway. At his feet lay the man whom he believed to be the husband of the girl.

CHAPTER XI

Looking Backward

After the duchess left Elynor and Michael together, Michael rearranged the pillows on the Reclining chair in which Elynor was resting, and seated himself beside her, saying:

"Now, Elynor darling, rest your head on my shoulder and tell me just what happened after I left you. Mother told me that you refused to accept anything from her and that you managed somehow to get along without any assistance until the duchess stepped in on that memorable Thanksgiving Day and changed the destiny of my loved ones."

"Michael, my dear," began Elynor, "Sir Gilbert came to me a few days after you left and tried to persuade me to follow you and explain the dread that was in my heart. I hesitated to accept his advice as I did not want to distress you unnecessarily. I thought that it would be better if I made no effort to see you again until after our child was born and I could better explain to you my fears. Had I foreseen that you would slip out of my life as completely as you did, I would have followed you to the ends of the earth. But, my dear one, it was intended that in order to learn the needs and suffering of others and to help my unfortunate sisters, I myself, should have to endure all the hardships that despair scatters throughout life's journey.

"Now that you have been restored to me, my gratitude to my heavenly Father is so great that I

even thank him for having given me the opportunity to drink this draught of sorrow which I now know was the rich wine which flows in the veins of every true-hearted man and woman.

"If you will remember, I had not touched the money you placed to my credit in the bank as a wedding gift, and so I had ample for my modest needs during that period in which I secluded myself and spent the time in prayer and anxious waiting for that blessed day on which my Lura Hope arrived.

"No, Michael dear, I would not go to your mother because I knew she would be very bitter against me for having driven you away and for deceiving her, as she thought.

"I awakened that Thanksgiving morning, and a strange calm had settled upon me. I was certain that on this day, would stand guard over me, the dispenser of life and death. Michael, I was alone—alone, my dear one, and I had no one to turn to on this day of days. I put myself in the hands of the Creator and left the decision to the Divine One. I was on my knees when Dr. Daniel McAlpin entered. I shall always remember the light of goodness—of kindness—of geniality, that gazed upon me out of those fine, clear, gray eyes. I turned to him and said, 'Doctor, this is the day.'

"He said, 'Yes, my child.'

"His arms opened to me and cheerily he said, 'Nothing to worry about, little girl; I will stay with you all through the day—all through the night if necessary. Don't cry; think of the joy that this will bring to Michael on his return. It is only a passing shadow—see what a glorious day it is; the clouds are of silver—there is not a speck of darkness in the sky,

so put your things on—I have made all arrangements at the hospital and everything is in readiness.’

“And so it was, Michael, so it was.”

“I went into the sanctuary which brought my Hope. Dr. McAlpin, that wonderful friend—that weaver of dreams—the tales that he told to cheer and comfort me—they would even bring laughter to *your* lips. The day dragged on and I wasn’t quite sure whether I wanted to cry or laugh; I think I did both.”

“Michael, I hope you will forgive me for what I am about to say, but you had ceased to be a part of the scheme of things for me that day. In that final moment I saw a vision—I shuddered away from the angel of death into the arms of the angel of life, and in our noble doctor was vested the divine right to safely conduct us on to the threshold of life.”

“The nurse asked me if there was anyone that I wished to inform of the happy event and I said, ‘Nobody.’ I little knew, Michael, that that word ‘nobody’ would suddenly transform a hospital into a castle for me, for your mother had heard that I had gone to the hospital and called the duchess and asked her to see that I wanted for nothing and begged the duchess to get permission from me to receive her.”

“I will give you the rest of the story as the duchess told it to me, Michael. We owe her a debt that can never be paid. You see, dear, with the exception of the recommendation of our physician, I seemed a poor, little, stray cat who had come in out of the storm seeking refuge, so when the duchess called up to inquire about me, she was coldly rebuffed by the nurse in charge. The nurse explained later that she was not aware that I had friends in the city. When

the duchess told her she was neither my mother nor my sister, the nurse would give her no information of any kind."

"The duchess was very much exasperated and to punish the nurse, she said, 'If Mrs. Markley will want for anything, you will kindly call the Ritz Hotel and ask for the Duchess of Marlboro.'

" 'Oh, yes, Duchess, of course,' gasped the nurse. 'And while it would not be possible to see the mother to-day, we shall be very glad to have you call, if you will, and look at the beautiful baby, which is the pride of the hospital.'

"Michael, from that day on began the dream life of my little Lura. The Lady Lura, the duchess' sister, was her godmother and became her patroness. The years passed and our Lura Hope brought joy and happiness to her dear old grandmother; and to Lady Lura she became the breath of life. In the lap of affluence, Lura grew into a beautiful, graceful, high-minded girl, and when I left for Japan, the Lady Lura took her to Switzerland to their chalet in Interlaken. There, Michael, she met the boy who was destined to make her suffer. I have here the first letter I received from Lura. Just a moment and I will get it. I will read it to you so you will know how this pretty little romance started and began to take on tragic elements.

" 'Interlaken, July 5, 19—.

" 'To my Mother:

" 'My dear, dear mother, first of all I want to thank you for my daddy's picture. I am having a miniature made of it and the Lady Lura, my other sweetheart, is having a dear little locket made for

me, and I will put the little miniature I have of you with that of daddy's and will wear it next to my heart, where you are always enshrined. I pray every night that daddy will come back to us."

"Mother, to-day I met a boy and he told me that he was an orphan and had been sent to Europe to study art. He is the *protégé* of an artist who discovered this little boy had extraordinary talent for painting, and as his patron was childless he adopted the boy and added to his name of Robert—Nathan Hall."

"It seems, Mother, that the only remaining member of the Dutch family of Johann Bott was his mother. She had been ill for years and years; it was a melancholy condition brought on by the loss of Robert's father. Robert told me that doctors could do nothing for his mother and the only thing that could save her would be faith in herself. One day, someone sent her a paper on Christian Science and she began to take a great interest in the subject and gradually her condition improved. Unhappily, while on a motor trip they had an automobile accident and his mother was instantly killed. That's a very sad story, isn't it, Mother dear? I felt so sorry for him."

"Later I found out what a good boy he was."

"Lady Lura and I were sitting on a bench in front of the Schweitzerhof Hotel when our attention was attracted to this same youth, who had an easel before him and was painting. I walked over to talk to him and saw he was sketching the "Yungfrau." He told me that his uncle had made a wonderful painting of the "Yungfrau" some fifty years ago, but someone had bought it and it could not be traced, so he was trying to reproduce it for a patron who was

interested in the lovely Swiss landscape crowned with this snow peak."

"My glance strayed to the far end of the path leading up to the mountain, and I caught sight of a flock of sheep and was surprised to see they were all black except one. This poor little thing had met with an accident in trying to vault over a fence which was placed there to enclose the pasture. The little white lamb was pinned between two bars of wood and his two little feet were lacerated by the nails that held it together."

"Robert followed my glance—jumped up from the easel and ran to the rescue of the lamb. I followed and as we approached, the sheep scattered in fear. Robert released the poor injured lamb. I took it in my arms and was weeping over it."

"Robert said to me, 'Why the lamb will get well again—you told me your name is 'Hope'—I find charity lying close to your heart and all you need is faith.'"

"Coming towards us fearfully and hesitatingly, with sad and hanging head was a beautiful black sheep. Its head had not been shorn and the soft, silken tresses veiled the remorse that was in the eyes of this deserter, who was a shepherdess of the flock. As she drew near, she grew bolder, and when she saw that we did not attempt to drive her away, she came up to the little lamb and caressed the wounded feet, and so expiated her fault. The little lamb seemed to say to me, 'Be good to her, she has repented.'"

"Mother, I looked up to the virginal whiteness of the maid of the dell and then glanced at the stern rugged lines of the monk at her side. The sun came forth in all its splendor and I fancied I saw the genial

warmth had melted part of the snow—and as it flowed down the face of the monk, it seemed to me that both the maid and the monk were weeping over the little lamb. Oh, Mother! why were the others so heartless? Those big grown sheep should not have deserted this little lamb who came amongst them only to be loved.”

“ ‘Later in the day, Robert told me a story of how he was reminded of that other Lamb whom the Romans had nailed to the cross and, Mother, Robert is a very, very bright boy. He told me that for years and years everyone was under the impression that God’s chosen people had done this wicked thing, but Robert said it isn’t true, and that the people just couldn’t understand. There was no way for them to know whether this good, kind idealist amongst them was really God’s son. Mother, nobody seemed to know. There was that big king who just laughed at him—and that Roman ruler who said he didn’t see any harm in him, but he wouldn’t have anything to do with him, just the same. Robert told me that if anybody needed to be saved in those days, it was the Romans, because the girls were indecent and the men were bad. Mother, they even built baths, Robert said, where they would go after they drank too much and some of them would lie around there almost unconscious.’ ”

“ ‘I know you think this is an awful story, but I may as well know it. Of course, you never would say anything about it and I can guess why—because father was a rabbi, but, Mother, you should not have been afraid to discuss it with me, because I think I understand why there is so much trouble in the world. People are not happy because they are always quarreling about things that are not really

important. The only important thing that I can see, from what Robert tells me, is to believe in the one God."

"Mother, he has great faith in Christ, and it is beautiful. He can't see why people think that Christ said He was God. Why, Robert told me the night before Christ was crucified, He said to some of His disciples, "I will not be with you long because my Father, who sent me to give myself as an offering to save the wicked in the world, has called me home. Before I go, my dear children, let us go into the house of Simon, my friend, and there we will partake of the Passover Feast and commemorate the forty years of our wandering in the forest in which God threw down Manna to us and kept us alive."

"Then, Mother, just think of it—can you imagine that anyone would be so cruel? Almost that same day, they took Him out and led Him amongst the people and wanted to make Him say and do things to prove that He was God. King Herod asked Him to fly for him, but He never said a word. He just looked as if He wanted to say, "If your eyes of clay cannot see that God sent me into the world for good, and having lived amongst you all these years, living the life that my Father planned for a happy and perfect universe, then the words of my mouth will be of no value, for words not borne out by acts die, and acts, remain fixed as stellar stars in the sky."

"What was the use of flying? If He had done these things, Robert said, and lived amongst them, He might have startled them for a little while just as each generation overwhelms us by its repeated wonders.

"Robert said the first time he saw an aeroplane

he was so excited that his mother had to reason with him to quiet his fears. He was sure the judgment day had come, because Robert said, if anything could fly, God had no protection against the people and they would fly right up to heaven and quarrel with Him because He did not satisfy their petty needs and would have to listen to their stupid criticisms of lives and actions of other people."

"You see, Mother, as soon as Robert's mother took up Christian Science, she had to read the Bible carefully in order to understand the subject if the attacks on her belief did come; Robert said she had to be prepared. Mother, you know that I think I am going to read the Bible every day, as I think it is much more instructive than some of the books which do not even point out a moral. Just think if I should die suddenly, how wonderful it would be if I should be stricken with the Bible in my hands. I could go right up to God and he would not even ask any questions as to what I believed, because I would hold in my hand the Bible and say to him, "Dear Father, I tried to follow your teachings."

"Mother, this is a very long letter, isn't it? I remember that you showed me a letter one day and somebody was talking to you about a little broken idol, and I recall that you were crying and that you went to Japan later. When you came back you wrote me that you had buried the little broken idol. Now, Mother, I am nearly finished, but oh, this has been such a big day—Robert is so wonderful. I told him he ought to be a preacher and do you know what he said? He said, "For me, he would be anything," but it was just as good to be a painter, because if he would paint pictures of beautiful land-

scapes, maybe sometimes the poor people who were shut in by tenements on all sides, would have a chance to see them and maybe they could even buy a cheap print and hang them in their poverty-stricken rooms and then they could imagine that it was a garden surrounding the house."

"Now, one more thing, Mother, and I am sure you don't know this at all,—if you did, you would have told me about it because it is only what you taught me of the great priests of Israel and God's chosen people, and of the first religion from which branched all religions of to-day. I would not have understood all these things Robert told me, but Mother, it seemed to me that you had fertilized the ground—planted the seed—and Robert had finished it with the harvest. This is what I wanted to say: "I never told you about one day I was playing in the park with some little children, and one little girl said she didn't want to play with me, because I was a Jew. You know, Mother, if I had known at that time that the Christ she believed in, lived and died a Jew, as Robert told me, I would have told her that she was not a Christian at all, and, besides Christ said, 'Love Ye One Another.' He didn't tell her not to love me, but I was afraid that I would hurt your feelings and never said anything about it, and if anybody ever tells you that the Jews killed Christ, don't you believe them, because Robert said that the Roman soldiers took Him in charge when they brought Him for judgment, and they spat on Him, they sneered at Him, they beat Him, and they even taunted Him when He was on the cross. Mother, please don't forget it was the Romans and not the Jews, that not only killed Christ, but refused to be-

lieve in Him. Jews were His followers—His disciples were all Jews. Robert said that maybe they did change their mantles but they could add nothing to the doctrine of God, nor take anything away from it. Robert said therefore there should be no religious differences.”

““Good-bye, Mother dear, God bless you. Lady Lura sends her love and Robert said he hopes you will like him when you meet him. With a million kisses, your little girl,
“‘Lura.’”

As Elynor finished reading the letter, it seemed to her that Michael's face was glorified.

“Elynor, my darling, my blessed girl, your prayers brought you and me a priceless treasure. They have spoken always of the priests of Israel. Oh, noble wife and mother, I know a priestess has arisen and my baby girl has in addition to her fine mind, the greatest of all gifts, that of the Healer. I think, Elynor, it is fitting now that I tell you that from the portals of death I was snatched by our little Lura. I met her, my darling, on the battlefield; in pain and agony she found me—this beautiful Lura of ours, and through her, God cleansed me of the crime I committed against both of you when I left you in my bigotry and misunderstanding.”

“Yes, Michael dear, but you don't know what that letter meant to me. I had made a mistake with you and made an exile of you, and brought down upon myself the condemnation of all your friends, and I again made the same mistake with my little girl.”

“The day after her confirmation, when she had reached the age of understanding, I should have told her the entire story of why you left me and prepared

her to meet the situation that finally confronted her when she met this Robert, who made such a vivid impression on her. Evidently, the youth had an extraordinarily developed mind and the teachings of his mother must have sunk very deep, for him to present to her this religious question in such a clear and concise form, that a child could read meaning into it. Again fear made a coward of me. I did not want to belittle you in her eyes—that earthly love had not stood the test when the divine will intervened, but I was wrong. I saw the danger of it immediately and sat down and answered Lura's letter on the instant, and told her of all the events that led up to the time of her birth, but unfortunately the letter did not reach Lura until too late to save her from heartache and pain."

"The little idol she speaks of in her letter, as you know, was my brother, and after you have finished reading Lura's response to my delayed letter, I will tell you how I found him, and the unhappy conditions which ended for him when the kindly Father gave him rest in the arms of mother earth."

"Here is the letter, Michael dear; I hope it will not grieve you too badly. I am anticipating, dearest, that you have something to tell me that is to bring happiness to me, for the last letter I received from our baby, she was in Florence studying carving and sculpturing with that renowned artist, Manfredo Franchi. In a happier moment, I will read the letter to you, in which she again had occasion to meet Robert in the art gallery of the Pitti Palace."

"Yes, Elynor dear, I have the sequel to your story and a very happy ending for all of us. It is to be my little secret until after I finish the tale of my

wanderings in strange lands, and because the climax will bring you great joy, it can afford to wait. You will then be able to understand better how perfectly our heavenly Father worked out the scheme of salvation for us.

"Now, Elynor dear, I know you are very tired. I want you to lie on the cushions and when I finish this letter, I want you to take a short nap, as I am going to introduce my little queen to the captain to-night and he has arranged a special menu. He is going to kill the fatted calf for the return of the prodigal."

After Michael had made Elynor comfortable, she lay gazing at him with an adoring look in her eyes. Michael began to read the message from the mouth of that babe, who knew only the truth, and at these tender years felt that the love of her mother was the only thing necessary for the time being to guide her and lead her aright. Obediently, if sadly, she readily gave up the childish sentiment that later grew into a deathless devotion.

"Ringenburg, Switzerland,

"October 8, 19—.

"My darling Mother:

"By some strange fatality, the warning letter you wrote me, failed to reach me, and fate would have it that it fall into my hands several years later.

"Lady Lura's secretary was ill, and she requested me to assort her mail, which had accumulated during our absence. Hidden away in a pigeonhole in her desk was the letter, which would have saved me from the heartache and pain, which it inflicts now, had I received it in due time. The sting of it would have

been softened by my failing to understand my loss, and I would not have felt the great void in my heart when I gave up Robert."

"Now you know, Mother, why I seemed to ignore the letter in which you asked me to give up a childish affection. If I had only received it in time, your broken-hearted little girl would be writing in a different strain, for, with the years I would have forgotten Robert. I met him again in Florence and was compelled to tell him that very day that it was better we give up our dream of happiness. I know you would have been deeply grieved could you have seen his expression, and particularly as it was preceded by the following conversation, which tells you what high spirits he was in when we saw him at the Pitti Palace in the Boboli Gardens. He was standing in front of the grotto in which were the unfinished statues of the Four Captives by Michelangelo, which were modeled for the monument of Pope Julius II. The reason I lay stress on this grotto and the unfinished models of Michelangelo, is because Robert was teasing me and asked if I had learned to be a great artist and could finish the masterpieces that this great genius had left incomplete. I answered that he needn't laugh at me; that if a 'Joan of Arc' could have saved France, through faith alone, perhaps the inspiration would come to me to produce masterpieces, too."

"I think, Mother, that Robert was very much ashamed for having taunted me as he did. You will note by the answer he made me, how thoroughly repentant he was. He said: 'I am sorry, dear; I did not mean to hurt your feelings. It is true, I was speaking lightly to you, but I do know that

geniuses are born and not made. You can't acquire the power to produce a masterpiece, and as you are still young, it might be that somewhere deep in the recesses of that noble brow lie hidden thoughts that may some day startle the world. Many of our great masters produced their most wonderful creations in middle life and so, dear one, we cannot tell what the future will bring forth.'

"Mother, dear, I told him what wonderful strides I was making with my studies with Signor Franchi, and I showed him the letter you wrote me acknowledging the glove box I sent you. You know, Signor Franchi's father refused to believe that I had not studied in America when he saw my first design for the floral decoration on the box. I am so glad that you are pleased to know that I have discovered I can get a great deal of comfort out of the work I am doing.

"Signor Franchi is sending you a wonderful Savonarola chair, which is an exact reproduction of the one that famous monk used in the monastery in which he was imprisoned. He is sending with it a gorgeously carved back for the chair, which you may use whenever you like. It has the Italian coat-of-arms on the seat and I know you will treasure it. I hope some day to reach that stage of perfection when I will be a worthy pupil of this gifted master.

"Perhaps, Mother, it was not intended that I should have a home of my own. It is possible that I am to live and devote myself to brightening and making happier the lives of others. I shall prove my love for Robert by renunciation, which, after all, is the greatest form of love. In giving up Robert, whom I love more than my own life, I am making my choice between love and duty, and my duty is to you, my dear,

beloved Mother. I know now, as you so clearly point out, that happiness could not be possible without the blessing of my darling Mother and without the sanction of my divine Father.

"I know, Mother, that God said, 'Make unto yourselves no graven images,' and should I pretend to worship Robert and exclude you and God, our love would not be complete. If Robert were of my faith, that would be different, but under the circumstances, our union would not be a happy one."

"You are right, Mother. I did not give Robert my reason for discontinuing our friendship. I could not tell him the truth and I would not sully my lips with a lie and so if Robert understands that religious differences caused our separation, he said nothing about it. I know that his faith is so intense that I could not ask him to give it up for me. On the other hand, knowing my sentiments as you do, and even though you express in your letter your willingness and readiness to give me up, if it be for my happiness, I know that I would not be happy and I would be very unfair to you, who have already suffered so much, to let my own selfish interests again darken your life."

"Yes, Mother dear, what a glorious thing it would be, as you say, if we could forget religious differences and recognize that we are the children of one Father and that one God created us all. I know now that until that time comes, Robert and I can mean nothing to each other."

"I am sorry that you misunderstood me, when I told you that many people married who did not permit religion to enter into the contract, and were quite happy. What I meant to say, was, that in

time I could prove to Robert's entire satisfaction that my conception of God was so simple to understand that he would have no difficulty in seeing the force of my argument in favor of a simplified belief."

"I know, Mother, that I am going to surprise you when I tell you that I really do not think Robert is fully convinced that he is absolutely right in his belief. I put a direct question to him one day, and asked him what it was that made him so positive his version of the religion, that came after ours, was the correct one. He hesitated for quite a while, and then startled me by saying that 'the only answer I can make to that question is that I never had occasion to discuss it with anyone before.' He said he saw no reason to enter into a quarrel with anyone that would prove nothing to him. Of course, Mother dear, he said he was only too happy to discuss it with me, because if he could convince me of the truth of his statements, he would find everlasting happiness, and make me see God in the true light."

"I think that was the first time I was a little angry with Robert. Why should he think that you had not been as careful and particular about instructing me in religious matters, as his mother had been in instructing him? However, I let it pass because I knew that if you agreed, after we were married, Robert soon would have seen that he was wrong and I was right. I see, Mother, that I was mistaken in this, too, for grandmother's tragic experience, followed by your own unhappy life, proves to me the fallacy of my reasoning."

"Yes, Mother, I am very sad, but not really unhappy, as I would be if I didn't see it wasn't so much

what you said, but my close association with Robert for the last few years and his views on religious subjects, that gradually proved to me that our happiness in the home might be problematical. This was brought forcibly to me by a little experience Lady Lura and I had in Paris."

"You know, Mother, Lady Lura has reason to love the Jews, because she has been associated with them many years in her philanthropic work and knows how generous and Godfearing they are. Of course, she has done everything to encourage me to always adhere to my religious training. Whenever we are in a small city, and it is not possible to go to a temple to worship, Lady Lura always takes me to a larger city when a holiday season is approaching, so that I may go to the temple."

"Lady Lura had taken me to Reims to see that marvelous cathedral. The following day was Yom Kippur, so she arranged that we spend the week in Paris. We went into the information bureau of the American Express Company, and asked where the temple was located. A man standing at the desk heard us. He turned and said, in a joking tone, 'Why do you want to know that?'

"The young man who was about to give us the information, asked me to step inside as he would like to talk with me. He then told me, Mother, that in Europe it was not customary to speak of things Jewish in public and therefore, since I did not have Semitic features, the man must have thought it a huge joke that I should be interested in a Jewish house of worship."

"Oh, Mother darling, would that the Creator give me this great mission—inspire me to bring light into

this darkened world. Why must we quarrel amongst ourselves and stand divided on the only question that is so easily answered? All God asks us to do is 'love one another.' I find it so easy to do this and the reason I feel the loss of Robert's love so keenly, is because it is so unnecessary that man-made laws should separate two beings who are intended for each other."

"I heard a very pretty story the other day, Mother, I can't remember the details and just what king it was that wanted to prove that love will find a way. A wise king had placed a maiden in a tower, far out at sea, in order to convince himself if it were possible that a mate could come to her out there. He sent her food every day by a carrier pigeon. One day the pigeon came back and brought a note that the maiden needed food for two. A vessel had been wrecked, so the story goes, and a youth swam to the tower to save himself. I am sure he did not ask her what her faith was, nor did she ask him that!

"Why should it be necessary to wrap ourselves in mantles that proclaim to the world our separateness, because of religious differences? We are human—intensely human—dogmatic teachings have raised barriers that have made life so full of complexities, and so unbearable that instead of blessing the Creator and Ruler of the universe, we blaspheme Him every hour of the day. Even those of us who think we lead righteous lives are injuring our fellow-men in some form or other, if it be only in separateness."

"Mother, darling, you have never been to Europe and so, therefore, if I seem too young to speak of these things understandingly, it is because you do not know how complete one's education can be when

they have finished a pilgrimage, so to speak, starting at the portals of what was once non-Christian Rome and which to-day is instinct with the highest form of civilization. We visited the tomb of St. Calixtus, and there in a niche lies a plaster paris cast of St. Cecilia, the patroness of music, where she was thrown after her martyrdom, and in all the catacombs in that great underground world, of this most marvelous city, are the bleaching bones of the great martyrs of Christendom. Mother, Mother, what a monster that Roman ruler was when he threw all those Christians to the lions in the Colosseum! Just a short walk, and triumphantly, St. Peter raises its dome, and flings back its challenge to the ruins which bear witness to the criminality of a benighted ruler.

"My darling Mother, you have heard the horrible news, of course. We are going to have war, and they say it is going to be a world war. Lady Lura and I are going to remain in Europe. We know there will be work to do, and I am sure you will be willing and glad for me to help, if it is necessary. Lady Lura said they will need nurses. I shall consider it a great privilege if they will accept me. Please don't be unhappy—please don't worry. I know that you will do your part, so please don't prevent me from doing mine. It will help to ease the pain, and I will not feel Robert's loss so much. He told me that he has already enlisted and is going to study gas engines, as he hopes to eventually be able to get into the air service.

"I will write you every day, Mother, dear. God bless you. I know there are big things for me to do and I am ready, and I say just as Robert said, 'One life to give and that belongs to my country.'

"Always your baby girl, "Lura.

"P. S.—Lady Lura sends her love. She also wishes you to tell the duchess she is writing her to-day, and not to worry. We are going to remain in Switzerland until the call comes. We will cable you every day."

Elynor watched Michael closely as he read Lura's letter and each emotion brought forth by the beautiful, noble thoughts of their daughter, reflected itself in his face. He stopped at intervals to caress and fondle Elynor. When he finished reading the letter, he handed it back to Elynor and the look of quiet content and happiness in their faces was a joy forever to behold. Their hearts were beating in unison, and their minds accepting with thanksgiving the joy which those of mature years can so fully understand and appreciate. Elynor's hand rested lingeringly in Michael's and when he was about to rise, she tightened her clasp and looked at him with alarm. She feared that she might awaken from some dream, as she had not as yet familiarized herself with the reality.

"Michael, darling," she whispered, "please don't leave me yet—let me tell you of my brother now and before the shades of evening fall we will bury the dark past and turn our backs to the west with our faces fronting the east. Michael, I want to bathe in the sunlight—I want to rejuvenate myself again—I want to make up to you the years which were filled with shadows."

"Elynor, my own, *Ma Cherie*," Michael answered, "to me you will always be the little girl of yesterday. I left you while you were still in the freshness of youth and beauty and find you very little changed.

I wish, my sweetheart, it were possible to come back to you as clean as I left you. I say these things, only, dear, because I want you to know that the many ungodly things I have done since I went away were due to my revolt and what I deemed a mockery of the Almighty."

"I am ready to listen to the story of your brother, and let us hope that that will be the only dark page with which we will close the book of misfortune for you. After dinner I shall relate only those adventures which will have direct bearing on the subject of how I was regenerated and was able to come back to my own, feeling that my suffering would make amends for the great wrong I had done you."

"Elynor, dear, this time I must insist that when you finish the story of your brother, you take a short nap. I want you to be fresh as a rose for the dinner to-night. The storm is subsiding—the sun is shining and on the morrow the indications are that we will sail under blue skies with no cloud to mar the horizon. I promise you now, Elynor, that never again will aught befall you that will bring you a moment's unhappiness. My one aim and ambition in life will be to gratify your slightest wish and I want you to promise me that in spite of the many dark tales I mean to tell you at the promised fireside, you will always remember it was my great love for you that drove me to the depths of despair and so nearly destroyed my manhood."

Elynor gazed steadily at him while he was speaking, raised herself slightly and with a lingering kiss, cut off all further speech. Then she began the story of her brother—the unfortunate one—the little crushed idol who was sacrificed to vicious habits.

"Michael, darling, I am going to tell you now some of the incidents that you knew nothing about in those first days when my brother and I became members of your family. You know that I was perfectly content and happy in your household because of my childish admiration for you. I will not dwell on that, as the principal thing I am aiming to do is to exonerate my brother and make you think of him in a more kindly way."

"The poor child, as you know, was a weakling, and the only one he was interested in was our father. He loved me in a sort of a way, but never would confide in me, and as you know, he disliked you and your mother heartily. I did my very best to take the place of father and mother to him as nearly as was possible, but I was not very successful in influencing him and making him obey me.

"Michael, dear, you don't know that one night the child came home in a deplorable state. I didn't tell you because I was ashamed of him. His shirt was torn to shreds and he was badly bruised about the eyes and had several deep cuts on his arms and shoulders. I think what made it so horrible, was that the odor of liquor was so apparent. I knew that whatever the nature of the trouble had been, he was in no condition to give me a coherent account of what had happened. Your mother was not home that night, fortunately, and I succeeded in putting him to bed after bandaging his wounds; he immediately fell asleep."

"I remember that I did not disrobe and laid down beside him. While watching him, many dark, bitter thoughts flitted through my brain, and a sort of rebellion arose in me, that we should be among

the unfortunate victims of circumstances. I recall, that in my childish way, I would not even say a prayer. I did not feel as if there was a God in a world that would permit innocent children to suffer through no fault of their own. We did not come into the world of our own accord, and if we had to be deprived of our natural protectors at such an early age, why didn't the Father, who was a God of love, foresee what might happen and arrange for a safe haven where we could be guarded until we reached the age of understanding?"

"I know, Michael dear, this seems very ungrateful on my part to have had such thoughts, when you and your dear mother tried so hard to make us happy and cared for us so tenderly. You would not blame me had you seen my little brother that night when he was so sadly in need of a mother's loving care and a father's protecting love. I will not dwell on all my thoughts that night; there was no strain of philosophy in them, as there is to-day—it was just the simple, childish heart crying out for understanding and love."

"Please Michael, don't let it affect you—I can't help crying," she said. Brushing away her tears and summoning a smile to her lips, she continued:

"I fell asleep beside my brother, and when I awakened sometime during the night, he had his arms around me. His poor little bruised head was resting on my shoulder and I felt the little form quivering with the sobs he tried to suppress. That was the first time he had ever shown me any affection, and I think I owe it to that night that the mother instinct awakened in me. I asked him no questions—just stroked his head and told him to go to sleep. Then

he said, 'I want my daddy. I know my daddy would have whipped those boys if he had seen them make me take that whisky.' Then I knew, Michael, how the whole thing had happened."

"The boys were just out for a lark—they called it fun to make him drink. I was not old enough to understand what that first glass of whisky meant. It was only in later years that the full force of what brother said that night came to me with all its tragic sidelights. I did everything in my power from that day on to make him have faith in me. For a little while he was very good, and I thought I would be able to change him and make the man of him that I hoped he would be, but it was beyond my puny strength to cope with this evil which was in his blood."

"I remember distinctly, Michael, the Friday night you caught him with the decanter of liquor after you had finished saying the blessing at dinner. I was standing behind the door and saw you snatch the bottle out of his hands, as he was about to put it to his lips. I heard you speak reprovably to him. A few days later he disappeared."

"I noticed that your mother seemed rather relieved, but you will never know how many sleepless and unhappy nights I spent wondering what had become of him. I know you made every effort to trace him, but he had disappeared so completely that it seemed as if the earth had opened and swallowed him. About a year later, I accidentally met some companions of his and they told me he had shown them a letter, in which he was asked to come and work on a ranch out West. I was relieved to know that he was at least alive, but as I was so helpless, there was nothing I could do.

"You were having so much trouble in your own family life that I kept this from you, because I felt it was sufficiently good of your dear mother and you to keep me and care for me as you did. Whenever I thought of my brother, I pictured him as he was that night, my little broken idol."

"As I grew into womanhood, I waited anxiously for the day when I would be free to go out into the world and start a search for him. In the meantime, you know, dear, the great love that came into my life momentarily drove out all other thoughts. It was very selfish on my part not to have made an effort to locate him, even though I would have aroused the displeasure of yourself and your mother by doing so. I blame myself for this lack of willpower on my part, and have often questioned since whether a great deal of my punishment was not because of this neglect of fulfilling a sacred duty. My dear mother, in her dying hour, had enjoined me to look after my brother. The only request she made of me in that solemn moment, I failed to comply with."

"Elynor, darling," said Michael, "your experiences, I am sure, have brought you to the understanding that we are not always the arbiters of our own lives. Circumstances sometimes arrange themselves so that we cannot battle against a fixed set of conditions. You yourself were a child and helpless. You could do nothing for your brother. You don't know how earnestly I searched for him. I made every effort to find him; I followed up every clue and it is unfortunate that you did not mention the incident of the letter to me. Had I known of it, perhaps the clue would have led to the finding of him. There are some things that we cannot and will never un-

derstand, and perhaps that is God's plan. Our greatest philosophers have been unable to reach a definite agreement as to why certain things are. It is hard to explain why the ripe peach, with the rosy cheeks, has sometimes imbedded in it a worm, and our speculating and trying to account for it leads us to nothing accurate as to its significance."

"All that I can see in the story that you are telling me so far, is that through your brother, it was evidently intended to demonstrate to mankind the evil brought on by a vicious mode of living and over-indulgence and immoderate use of all things placed within the reach of self-governing individuals."

"We are endowed with the faculty to choose between right and wrong and when we do not abuse, and use sanely and wisely, the manifold gifts of the Creator, which we find in the luscious juice of the grape—in the seed which is planted in the rich soil—in the flowing brook, which quenches our thirst—in the deep recesses of the earth, where are embedded gems of priceless worth, to warm and protect us from wintry blasts—yes, when we keep these faculties unimpaired, from all these wondrous sources spring lifegiving elements, and Elynor, darling, when I laid the burden upon you, demonstrated to mankind that to each is given the task allotted to carry through life's journey. Yours, my darling, was to point the way to all women that a noble life consecrated to wifehood and to motherhood, brings its own rich reward."

"To *me* was given the divine privilege of finding myself. Through my great suffering, I came to the realization that love, whether it be of earth or of heaven, is divine, and if in my heart, God implanted

you as the ideal, then it must be your beautiful little hand that will lead me to the Creator."

"In you, my sweetheart, I have discovered the three valuable gifts which are the heritage of mankind. You were my beacon light leading me ever onward to hope. The way you received me, proves your great charity; your unquestioning belief in me, shows me the wisdom of your faith."

"Michael, my brave, noble hero," Elynor said, with a look of wonder on her face, "I am afraid you are exaggerating the part I played in our tragic story. In all the years of your wandering, you were alone, while I had our darling baby, our Hope, to cheer and comfort me. You graciously accept the larger share of blame. My dear one, I have never for a moment accused you of unworthiness. I have loved you and trusted you always, and I do not yet know why the Almighty has blessed me so. I thought the sun had set, but I see that only a cloud hid it for a time. Michael, darling, I am so happy—so happy, I am sure if I took your hand and stepped out on yonder waves, this great sustaining inner light would carry us onward and upward, and love and life for us would be everlasting."

"I had intended to dwell at length on the story of my brother, but I find it unnecessary now. I will tell you in as few words as possible how I found him in Japan. You have pointed out clearly to me that he came for a purpose which we do not understand. 'The Lord giveth—the Lord taketh away—blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

Michael's tears were now mingling with those of Elynor's. "Come, darling," said Michael, "finish the

story now; you are making yourself very unhappy. 'Let the dead past bury its dead.'

"Michael, dear," Elynor began, "Lady Gertrude Madeline Haley, a cousin of Lady Lura's, had planned a trip to Japan and asked me to accompany her. She was very much interested in the great evil that had suddenly attacked our country, which was not only destroying the finest specimens of manhood, but even many women were forming this frightful habit, which is to-day the greatest menace to future generations. As you know, dear, prohibition in America struck at the saloons, which were the cradles of crime, and in which crooked minds conceived of the most fiendish plots to destroy the life and the property of the unwary individual. These places were suddenly closed, which was a blessed thing for America, but unfortunately, instead of carrying out its great aim and mission to restore to men their self-respect, and the recognition of the debt they owe to their communities by living clean and decent lives, it raised a spectre which is beyond their power to cope with. Far back in the hills a new poison was brewed, and a poison from which many predict that the next century will find much of the population blind."

"Of course, Michael, it seems strange that I should speak to you of such things; you, who have been all over the world and have seen the evil brought on by this pernicious influence, but dear one, it has not been brought home to you as it has to me. The frightful consequences which this terrible habit brings, destroys the man himself and brings disaster in its wake. You know, Michael, they say 'those whom

the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad.' We know that Nero was drunk when Rome burned, and so we find through the ages that wherever, there is an act of lawlessness we can invariably trace it to the abuse of this liquid which makes the blood turn to fire and attacks and destroys the seat of reason."

"Michael, dear, do not think that I am against drink. In the Passover Feast the cup is filled, but throughout the feast we are admonished to drink only at the close, as many cups as we think will still leave us normal enough to feel only a sense of exhilaration and joy which is instilled in us from the fruit of the grape."

"Michael! Michael! I found my brother in Japan. I won't go into details. For the craving of whisky, he had substituted that white powdered substance that destroys—destroys! You have seen how the dope fiend sinks into the mire, in which the crawling things of the earth become his companions. So I found my brother—a raving maniac—an outcast—a thing of shame—in the slums of Japan. When I found him he was dying. Some of his low companions were with him. I called an eminent physician, but it was too late; nothing could be done. He never recognized me."

"Michael, in that room I took out the parts of the broken cross which my mother had given me, and which you thought I cherished because of the significance of what the symbol stands for, but you were wrong. I did not need the cross to know of that divine One who came to dwell among us for so short a time."

"There lay the lifeless form of my brother on the

divan, and they were preparing him for his grave. His arms were outstretched and his head had slightly fallen. Michael, we have been blind. We needed no cross. In that little, dark, smelly room, with the dim light flickering from a candle, which someone had placed in a broken bottle, I saw my brother on the pillory. His human body was the cross. I took the two broken bits and placed them over his heart. I knew then, that when my father crushed that emblem, he had opened an abyss between us. It was not my privilege to bring him out of the dark depths into which he had fallen."

"His companions offered to take charge of the body for me. My grief was so great and I did not want that noble girl, Lady Madeline, to know of the depths of disgrace my brother had fallen into, so I consented to have them accompany the body to America."

"I am going to finish by one of the most tragic features in the entire story of this altogether, useless, worthless life. When we landed on American soil, these men, who accompanied my brother's body, were recognized as smugglers of opium into the United States. This threw suspicion on my brother's body. They desecrated the dead; they opened the coffin and they found, Michael, that his entrails had been removed and that frightful drug had been substituted, which was to continue to undermine the strength of the structure, which we call civilization."

So ended the dark chapter. Elynor was sobbing on Michael's breast. Tenderly—tenderly—he laid her on the divan. He poured a glass of wine and whispered: "Now, my darling, I want you to drink this and go to sleep. When I return I expect you to greet me

with a smile and put all sad thoughts out of your mind."

"I am going to stop in to see Dr. Hammel now. I owe a great deal to this capable surgeon. He was not feeling well when I left him this morning."

Michael waited for a few moments, and when he saw that Elynor had fallen asleep, he left the cabin. He had just entered Dr. Hammel's cabin, when suddenly he was startled by the loud report of a gun, which had so frightened the duchess and Harold. Dr. Hammel rose excitedly and both of them rushed in the direction whence the shots came.

CHAPTER XII

Marie's Father Appears

The duchess stared over Harold's shoulder aghast at the spectacle with which she was confronted. Towering over the prostrate body of the girl's companion, stood a tall, old man with rugged face, who held a gun in his hand. His shoulders were bent and he looked as if he were transfixed with horror by the sudden catastrophe. On each side of him stood a plain-clothes man.

Then the duchess' attention became centered on the face of the old man, and she could never explain to her own satisfaction why she should have glanced back again at the photograph which she held clutched in her hand, when the fierce quarrel began to rage across the way. Her eyes grew larger as she gazed at it, and the mystery became so baffling, that she finally gave up the problem.

Searchingly, her eyes traveled into the far recesses of the corridor, and huddled there was the girl. The blood was flowing from her shoulder and while she seemed conscious, she was weakly supporting herself on the brass rail which stretched across the corridor.

Harold's anguished gaze followed that of the duchess and in a twinkling of an eye he was at the side of the girl. He lifted her in his arms and at a commanding gesture from the duchess, brought her into the cabin and quickly closed the door.

At that moment Michael appeared on the scene with the captain and Dr. Edwin Hammel. They had to open a passageway through the throngs that were standing on the staircases and in the corridors. The shots had brought together all the passengers within hearing distance and on order from the captain, the stewards requested the passengers to clear the passageways, so an investigation could be made as to how this terrible tragedy had taken place.

Dr. Hammel hastened to the side of the dying man, who was murmuring some incoherent words which the doctor could not understand. The doctor called Michael, knowing him to be familiar with all languages. The dying man whispered his message into the ears of Michael, closed his eyes, and gasped—and the face settled into the immobility of death. In the meantime, the captain had given orders that all traces of the struggle be removed, and the body carried from the scene.

Michael hurriedly knocked at the duchess' door and he and Dr. Hammel entered. The wounded girl was lying on the divan and Harold was staunching the blood which was still flowing freely. The doctor went quickly to the divan and examined the girl's shoulder. The bullet had grazed the shoulder blade, and inflicted but a very slight wound. He bandaged the shoulder and the girl was left in care of the maid, while he and the duchess and Michael went to the captain's quarters, the doctor having requested Harold to remain with her until they returned. They were all concerned about the man who had so suddenly and strangely appeared on the scene. The duchess recalled the conversation between the dead

man and the injured girl on the night before, and slowly was forced on her the realization that in some way this old man was not only the father of the girl, but Elynor would form one of the links in this eventful and extraordinary series of strange happenings.

She looked at Michael with much concern. A nameless fear was clutching at her heart. Was the bright sun, which had suddenly shone forth upon these overcast lives, again to be dimmed by a new tragedy? Were Michael's and Elynor's lives to be made up of clouds with a promised silver lining which would never materialize? It was all too maddening—she would think of it no more.

By this time the duchess, Michael, and the doctor had reached the captain's quarters, where the old man had been conducted, and there they found assembled the captain, his mate, and the two plain-clothes men. The old man was about to tell his story when they entered, but waited until they were seated.

"I will tell you as nearly as I can of the events that led up to the shooting," began the stranger.

"If I will not tax your patience too much, I will first of all explain the presence of the two plain clothes men. I noticed before I boarded the steamer that they had been following me and I evaded them."

"Yes," answered one of the men, "we were in the loan shop in which you bought the gun, and as we saw that you were a stranger, we followed you to your wife's grave and there heard your confession. While one of the men kept his eye on you, I reported it at headquarters, but the man who was watching you, got chicken-hearted and let you escape. It

was an accident that I again saw you. You had jumped into a cab and I followed you to the dock. You got away from me in the crowd, but I made up my mind that I would watch everybody that got on the steamer. I caught sight of one of our men, and told him to phone headquarters for instructions. He came back and said we should board the steamer and get all the information we could until we got to Sandy Hook, and if we did not find you by that time, give up the chase."

"We followed instructions and made a hurried search, but could not find you and decided to give you up. As we were about to leave the vessel we caught sight of you again and let the pilot go off without us, and so we swung back into the vessel."

"Thirty years ago, I became a fugitive and a hunted man," continued the old man. "When I married and tried to establish a home, I left out a very important factor and that was God, the Creator. My wife, who was a very devout woman, made every effort to bring me to an understanding that my scoffing and irreverence for my Maker would eventually lead me into the wrong path, but I only laughed at her and found that not being compelled to follow a set line of conduct, I could do many things that simplified life for me and made it much easier and pleasanter to live. But after a time I found that things were not going so well with me. In the office where I was employed, many of my co-workers hardly took a step without taking their Maker into account, and I noticed that few of them took any interest in me and when they were planning some social function, somehow my wife and I were always excluded from these affairs. I began

to feel this neglect keenly and so vented my anger on my wife. I noticed that she began to fear me and ceased to make any effort to bring me around to her way of thinking. I found no pleasure in my home, as my wife and I had very little in common, and so on my way home I would stop in at a saloon in the neighborhood and not return until late at night."

"After our boy came, I took great joy in him, but when he was beginning to prattle he said to me reproachfully one day: 'Daddy, why don't you come home every night? Mother cries all of the time.' The reproach on those baby lips, instead of bringing us closer together, seemed to make the gulf wider, because I knew that it was not possible to give up the mode of living that I had grown accustomed to. Knowing how she worshipped the child, I took a fiendish delight in talking to him against his mother, and I think it was because alcohol had gradually done its work and paralyzed my faculties to such an extent that I was unable to discriminate between good and evil."

"I did not realize that in carrying out my own selfish plan I was forming the mind of the boy and instilling the poison into him. Our little girl, who came later, was beyond my jurisdiction, as she clung to her mother and was mortally afraid of me. I had, by my misbehavior and ill-treatment of my wife, called down upon myself the scorn of the entire community and my isolation would have been complete had not my boy believed in me so entirely. One day I overheard a conversation in which I was being severely censured for my paganism, and I went into the saloon and there in my anger I decided that the next time I caught my wife in the act of performing

any religious rites, I would make her decide once and for all that if she wanted to continue living with me she had to give up her religion. I vaguely remember that when I left that saloon I had nothing very definite in my mind as to what I meant to do. I was walking towards my home when I saw my wife come out of a building where they sold religious books. I followed her home and cannot recall just what happened there. When I regained my senses, I was holding aloft a part of a broken bottle, my wife was on the floor, and my little girl was standing gazing at me with terror. I ran from the house and took shelter in an old barn on the outskirts of the city. I lay there all night and the next morning I heard the boys shouting in the streets, 'Extra, read about the murder.' I crept trembling from my hiding place, bought a paper and there saw the whole story, and knew there was nothing left for me to do but to fly and hide myself away from those who would be on my track to turn me over to justice. I could think of nowhere that I could go to hide myself from my pursuers. I knew one of my sisters had married and was living in Vermont, and so I decided if I could escape the vigilance of the police I would go to her and consult with her as to the best way out of my terrible situation. I knew there was a bus leaving that would take me to a small neighboring town where I could get a train, and as it was still very early I knew that a lot of red tape would follow the investigation and before the machine of the law had been set in motion I would be on my way and out of their reach. I had picked up much information from the low element that lounged about the saloons and I put it to good use."

"When I boarded the bus I was very nonchalant, and as the one topic of conversation was the murder of the night before, I joined in it and so warded off suspicion. After a little wait, I boarded the train. Every sound startled me and when the train stopped my heart was filled with a cringing fear. It seemed every man on that train was my enemy and I knew that every hand would be turned against me if a glimmer of suspicion were aroused. When we reached Vermont, it was dusk and with a sigh of relief I was about to alight from the train when I saw two men standing at the entrance guarding the doors. I managed to pass by with an air of bravado. I saw one of the men look at me closely and then it seemed that he was trailing me."

"Night had completely fallen by this time and in the distance I saw a building lighted up. I was walking hurriedly and in glancing around again saw this man. I rushed across the street, a car came along and hid me from view. I dashed into the building, which proved to be a church, ran up to the altar and hid myself beneath the pulpit."

"I waited for about ten minutes, found that no one had followed me, and was preparing to leave the church when the minister came up the altar steps, and some of the members of the congregation began to file into the church. There was nothing to do but remain in my place of concealment. My heart was beating so that I was afraid that the minister could hear it, but the organ began to peal out its tones and deadened all sound."

"I knew it would be but a question of time when the minister would discover my presence, and only a miracle could save me now. In that moment I

would have given twenty years of my life for faith in a Supreme Power."

"The slightest commotion set me trembling and with my sharpened faculties the words of the minister rang out like the tones of a trumpet, 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay.' It had been years since I entered a church, and the fascination of the strange doctrine that this man of God preached, struck me with the greater force because of the newness of this double experience."

"It seemed hours before the congregation was dismissed, and finally when everyone had gone and that great stillness of peace settled in the atmosphere, every sound became audible. The minister was wiping his eyeglasses when an incautious movement of mine attracted his attention. I knew the best thing to do was to come from my hiding place, tell my story, and plead for his protection."

"He was taken aback when I emerged, but I quickly explained what I was doing there and begged that we go somewhere so I could tell him my entire story. His sermon led me to believe that he would help me. He agreed to do this and took me to his home."

"After I had told him of all the events which led up to my unhappy situation, he told me I could remain at his home that night and he would decide in the morning just how far he could help me."

"The next morning he had a long talk with me, asked if I would be willing to begin all over again and said if I could make provision for my children to be properly cared for he would shield me, as my act was not deliberate and that I had no intent of committing a crime."

"The following day he wrote a letter to my sister, explaining that I was under his protection and asking her to place the children with a distant cousin. He gave me a position as sexton in the church. That good man accomplished for me what years of effort on the part of my martyred wife failed to do."

"Five years later, when I had become a part of that household, in which the daughter of the house was my constant companion, I unfortunately lost my good friend. Death stepped in and left the girl alone in the world. We were married shortly after and moved out West, and after our little girl was born I began to get letters from my boy pleading with me to let him come and live with us. He said his sister was quite happy in the new haven she had found, but he was dissatisfied and wanted to get away. I talked it over with my wife and we decided to let him come."

"I was horrified to find that I had transmitted the appetite that had so nearly wrecked my life, to the boy, and my one ambition was to cure him of this frightful habit which was destroying him."

"My daughter heroically put forth her best efforts in his behalf, but without avail. When prohibition came we had a dreadful time with him, and he would resort to all sorts of narcotics in order to satisfy his craving for artificial stimulants. He was making us very unhappy and one day when I remonstrated with him a terrible scene followed and he left. From that day our misfortune began. From a prosperous farmer in this Western country town, who had the esteem and good will of the entire community, I began to lose prestige because of this boy's misdoings. He threw suspicion upon our own child, Marie, who had grown up a sweet, innocent flower, surrounded as she was

by the beauties of nature and the loving care of a mother and father who adored her. Her religious training was the most important part of the daily routine."

"Marie was pointed out as an example—a model child among her classmates—and when she grew into young womanhood her faith was an inspiration to her friends and associates. When she sang at the service on Sunday morning, the congregation was thrilled by the beauty of her glorious voice."

"This scoundrel whom you saw stretched at my feet was the instrument that God chose to make the guilty pay for the innocence that was sacrificed on the altar of self. The daughter whom I abandoned is avenged—by the daughter whom I tried to safeguard."

"That impostor was a wealthy banker from Maine and came to me ostensibly to buy some land, but really to destroy God's handiwork. One morning when mother came to wake Marie with her usual cheery good-morning kiss, Marie was gone. On the table we found a note telling us that she had left with the stranger, a man who was not of our faith, and would not understand this beautiful fragile flower that he no doubt meant to crush."

"We searched everywhere for her, but the search was futile. One day a letter came telling us she was happily married to this man of her choice, but had kept silent as she knew that we would never allow her to marry outside of her faith. The shock of it broke her mother's heart, and killed her. I finally left the village, with but one thought in mind—to kill the man who had robbed me of my daughter, broken my home, destroyed my happiness and taken

all my treasures. In her letter she gave the date of the sailing of the vessel on which they were going abroad, and I made a hasty journey to New York to take the same steamer."

"It was a simple matter to embark and remain in my cabin until the opportunity presented itself to carry out my purpose."

"I crept up to their door on different occasions and got fragments of their conversation, but each time it was impossible to carry out my purpose as the occupants of the suite facing them could see anyone loitering in the corridor."

"However, I did not neglect an opportunity, and when I caught a glimpse of Marie sitting at the piano playing her mother's favorite song, 'Just Awearyin' for You,' my heart melted to my little girl—but, only to *my* little girl. The degraded creature at the piano was not my little girl. I had no sympathy with her late repentance—she had ruined our lives—the future held nothing more for me."

"I had bought a gun when in New York, determined that if my suspicions of that scoundrel were verified—that if he had betrayed and deceived Marie, I would put an end to three worthless lives. Before doing this, I went to the grave of my martyred wife and begged on bended knees that she plead with the Father to forgive this last unholy act, which would expiate my fault and which would 'Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's'—'An Eye for an Eye—A Tooth for a Tooth—A Life for a Life.'"

"This vulture had taken the light from my eye and with the treacherous tongue of the serpent, he had destroyed the Eden in which God had created man guileless. I would not hesitate to send the soul of

the girl to its Maker, because her last words that I overheard were repentance. As for that scoundrel, he polluted all things pure. As for myself, for the life I took, I would render mine."

At last light came to the Duchess. The story was Elynor's story—the man was Elynor's father—the girl was Elynor's sister. Truth proved stranger than fiction; the improbable had happened. How would it all end?

Michael escorted the duchess back to her cabin, and she was greatly relieved when he told her that he had left Elynor fast asleep, and said that he hoped he could keep the tragedy from her. He did not want to destroy her new-found happiness. He also told the duchess of his plans for the evening.

Michael then left the duchess and joined the captain to make arrangements for the disposal of the body. This left the duchess free to think out a course whereby the girl could be reconciled to her father. She said no word to Harold, who was in earnest conversation with Marie, and although he looked at the duchess inquiringly, she did not look as if she cared to discuss the thing any further for the moment.

She entered her sleeping apartment and threw herself on the bed. Lucy had lowered the shades and the duchess made an effort to fight off a seasick feeling.

The vessel was plunging, and although the fog had lifted, the storm which came afterwards was abating, but was still washing the exposed end of the deck and many of the passengers who were beginning to feel the effects of the storm had confined themselves to their rooms. The duchess was chilled to the bone, and Lucy prepared her a cup of hot tea and

added some cognac to it and the soothing drink brought oblivion to her for a few hours. When she awakened, Lucy told her that Marie had slept for a little while and that Harold had returned to his cabin and left a message that he was at the duchess' command at any time she felt the need to call on him.

CHAPTER XIII

Marie Asks Forgiveness

When the duchess had finished dressing, she went into the lounge and asked Marie whether she felt well enough to go to her father. Marie replied, "Duchess, I will be only too happy to be reconciled to my father, if you think he will take me back again. I will try to make amends for my wrongdoing by devoting myself to him and my art, for the rest of my life."

"Yes, Marie," said the duchess, "I am sure you have had your lesson and that you now know that there is only one road that we can travel in safety, and that is the straight and narrow path, which, though it may not always lead to happiness, will bring peace at the end of the journey. Stand up, Marie, and if you feel strong enough, we will go to your father immediately. We have had enough tragedy for one day and the spirit of gloom on the steamer must be dispelled. We will try to explain that the shooting was accidental and keep the true facts of the case hidden as much as possible from the curious passengers."

Unhappily for Marie, in order to reach the captain's quarters, they had to make their way through a crowd of men and women who mercilessly gazed at the girl—some with pity, but the majority of them with scorn. When the duchess saw how contemptuously they were staring at the unfortunate girl, the scene

of the night before rose before her. The suggestive dancing—the liquors that exhilarated just enough to express a subtle meaning—the gowns that so cleverly draped the forms, exposing more than they concealed—and then flashed into her mind, “Those among you who are innocent, cast the first stone.” Her face expressed something of the thoughts that were in her mind, and the people turned away contritely.

When the duchess and Marie reached the captain’s quarters, the girl’s father was sitting with bowed head, and when she appeared before him, he sprang to his feet. The duchess was horrified to see that he had been handcuffed, and in the far end of the cabin were the two plain-clothes men, apparently keeping guard over him.

Marie sank at her father’s feet and with outstretched arms, began to weep and plead for his forgiveness. There was no relenting in that stern face and his words that followed, confirmed the verdict.

“No! there is no forgiveness in my heart—you killed your mother—you brought shame upon me—you have become an outcast from society. I could forgive you if you had remained the sweet, simple girl you were when you left home, but it did not take you long to become one of the crowd. I saw your immoral conduct since you boarded the steamer; the very clothes you wore made you a thing of shame. You lent yourself readily and willingly to the schemes of this scoundrel. You hoped to hold him by your suggestive actions—you seemed well informed as to what a scoundrel of his type needed to make his so-called ‘love’ lasting, but unfortunately for you, you were not experienced enough to know that the blacker the life a *roué* leads, the greater

is his respect for women who are out of his reach, and whom he puts in a class with his mother and sisters. You, by your wanton conduct, have isolated yourself from decent people. Even if he had married you, you still would have been barred from good society, for many of the so-called society people, be they ever so loose in their own morals, will resent obscenities forced on them in public. You have had no regard for the distinguished and high-minded passengers, who have expressed their opinion of you by ignoring your presence among them. You have not only outraged society, but you have torn down the structure that was erected for the protection of the home. Now go and work out your own salvation. Pray God to forgive you, for you have not only been a traitor to those who loved you, but you have betrayed your God and his teachings. I never want to see you again."

The duchess crossed over to the girl's side, took her arm and led her away. Seeing the heartbroken look on the face of the girl, when she unexpectedly learned that her poor mother was dead, brought tears of sympathy to the eyes of the duchess.

She said: "Marie, you see what one false step has done? If you had gone to your mother and confided in her, she would have pointed out all the consequences of a mistake, which you now see so clearly was brought about by your secrecy and failure to trust in that great mother-love that would grant you everything within reason, if she thought your happiness was involved. She would have explained to you there could be no happiness with a man of this type, even though he were of your faith, for I know now that you had very little in common. He would

have made you happy as long as he paid you the attention that every woman craves, and satisfied your desire for pleasure, and bought you fine raiment, but as soon as he would tire of you, you would take separate roads."

"His, of course, would continue on the downward path, as the appetite for the grosser things of life does not diminish; quite the contrary. As the senses are satiated, they search about for new sensations, which they find only in the lower planes of life, and therefore, many who lose control of their will-power, sink so low that they finally become bits of human wreckage, which drift with the tide and are eventually swept out in the ocean of life and are submerged and no one knows what becomes of them."

"Yes, Duchess," admitted Marie, "that was my plan last night after I found the letters. I stole out of the stateroom and planned to throw myself into the sea. The wind was howling and wailing—the mist had enfolded the vessel, and I crept forward. As I rounded the bend, something seemed to whisper, 'Marie, that's the cowardly way; you must expiate on earth. You cannot go before the seat of judgment with your soul black with deceit.' I thought of my dear mother and at that moment a wave hit the side of the vessel—the wind caught my garments and swept me across the deck. I flung out my arms, held tightly to a lifeboat and raised myself and crept into it. When the vessel ceased plunging for a moment, I cautiously lifted myself over the side of the boat and grasped the rail running along the side of the vessel and gradually groped my way through the black darkness towards the ray of light that was shining from the hallway."

"My spirits and the elements were in harmony, but the tranquillity and the peace of that interior beckoned to me encouragingly, and I strained every nerve and fought to regain my cabin. The wind was tearing at my garments and the rain was beating mercilessly down on my head and shoulders. I shuddered with horror at this thing I had planned to do."

"I know now that I would never have had the courage to go through with it, for I was half drowned before I fought my way back. I finally reached the door and it took some effort on my part to open it. The fight I had put up to save my life proved to me that as long as there would be a ray of hope, I would cling to life, rather than face death, not knowing what was awaiting me in the great beyond."

"It was then, Duchess, that I decided to live my life apart and to begin all over again."

"Of course, I did not know that my father was on the steamer, and that I would have the good fortune to find friends aboard. I know now that my dear mother's spirit must have been keeping watch over me, and I am going to try to begin my life over again so that my father will relent in time and take me back again."

Marie had barely finished speaking, when the duchess caught the sound of hurried footsteps and a deep murmur of excited voices. She felt intuitively that the climax had come and something had happened in the captain's quarters. As she hastened out on deck, Michael met her and exclaimed, "In mercy's name, Duchess, go back to the girl and keep her with you; her father has thrown himself overboard. I am going to investigate what happened.

I heard shouts, 'man overboard! man overboard!' and am on my way now to hear the details."

"Michael," said the duchess, "go to Elynor as quickly as you can—guard her every moment—she must not know of this new frightful thing that will bring her unending sorrow. That man is her father—the girl is her sister. You have come back to take the place of mother, father, and brother. In the future you will have to be all things to Elynor."

Michael stood transfixed. He was overwhelmed that God in his infinite mercy had sent him back to his own at this critical hour.

The duchess arrived on deck in time to see the lifeboats lowered into the seething waters. The sea was still very rough, but the sun was shining. In one of the lifeboats was the chief officer with a picked crew. With a prayer on their lips, the passengers watched the boats bobbing on the water at the mercy of wind and wave. The suspense was enervating. The sailors searched the waters for two hours, but their task was futile. The sea had grown calm, but there was no trace of the missing man. The lifeboats returned and the steamer continued on her way.

The duchess kept staring over the side of the vessel—a strange fascination compelling her glance to remain fixed on the water—and then, suddenly she saw floating along the side of the vessel the body which seemed to be sitting on the water! She was awed by the sight she beheld. Sitting on the water, in a prayerful attitude—how could this be possible?

She started, when she felt an arm encircling her and turned her head and looked into the eyes of Harold,

who said: "Duchess, I know just how you feel; I have been watching that form for some moments myself. I think I can explain what seems so mysterious to you. You didn't know it, but you were speaking aloud. I happened to be standing near the captain's door when this unfortunate man rushed out on deck with the two plain-clothes men close on his heels. They told me they had handcuffed him because they were afraid he would harm himself, but they were not prepared for the sudden dash he made to throw himself overboard. Fortunately they caught him in time, and with a rope which was hanging nearby, they tied his feet, but it seemed that fate took a hand and the vessel pitched forward, threw the man away from his captors, and an immense wave washed over the deck and carried its prey with it. The hands and feet being bound, made it possible for the body to assume that sitting posture on the water."

CHAPTER XIV

Elynor's Martyrdom

The duchess sent a message to Michael to join her in the lounge. Elynor was sleeping peacefully, so Michael kissed her tenderly and left her in charge of the stewardess, who was unpacking one of his trunks, which were laden with gorgeous gowns for Elynor. On the dressing table, Michael placed a jewel case filled with precious stones, and in a conspicuous spot where Elynor could not fail to see it the moment she opened her eyes, he laid a priceless pearl necklace presented him by a Russian nobleman as a token of appreciation for saving his sister from a mad attempt on her life by a Bolshevist.

As soon as Michael received the message he hastened to the side of the duchess, and she greeted him with the following words:

"Michael, I am going to rend your heart with the one tragic element in the life of Elynor, which will prepare you for the moment of agony you will be confronted with before many hours."

"When Lura Hope was six months old, Elynor began to have trouble with her breast. She was in New York at the time and could not afford to consult a physician who could have given expert advice, and not knowing that a serious condition might develop, she neglected to give the ailment careful attention."

"About four years later, I received a long distance

call and was informed that my presence in New York was imperative. My attorney stated the matter could not be discussed over the phone. An hour later, I was on my way to New York. When I met my attorney at the station, he told me that it concerned Elynor and that he was taking me to her apartment."

"When I entered Elynor was alone. Lura was being taken care of in the apartment next door. Michael, permit me to address you so,—your name has been on Elynor's lips daily, as her idol, and I have grown accustomed to the ring of it—you know how artistic Elynor is, and you will now realize that her acceptance and resignation in this great calamity which had befallen her had made possible the following scene which I am going to portray as nearly as I can."

"Elynor's chamber was simply furnished—but her love of subdued lights and color effects produced the following results, and caught me unprepared for the frightful news I was about to hear."

"Michael, pull yourself together, for Elynor, with the rosy light of the shades reflecting an artificial color to her face, bravely and cheerily said:

"'Duchess, my good, kind friend—my more than sister—I have not many hours to live. I sent for you to ask you to take my little Lura; you have no children of your own, I know you will love her.'"

"'The doctor says it is only a question of days. I am eaten up with cancer—the poison has gone so deep that I can no longer rest.'

"Tears trickled down her cheeks, but she went bravely on.

“ ‘I am so helpless—so useless—and I know that after I am gone, Lura’s father may come back some day, and with me out of the way, she will come into her own. My wealthy uncle may take care of her, although he has done nothing for her as yet. Her grandmother always wanted to take her from me, but Duchess, I had only my baby. I am afraid I have been a very selfish mother. I should have considered her welfare, but my misfortune has left a little bitterness in my heart.’ ”

“ ‘While I forgive Mrs. Markley, I prefer to have you, my beloved friend and benefactress, take my little girl. She loves you and the Lady Lura dearly.’ ”

“ ‘Michael, your mother had followed on the next train; she could not arrange to go with me. When she came to Elynor, that is when they asked mutually to be forgiven. I felt sorry for your mother, Michael, well—I don’t want to wound you, but I could not help but think that it would have been better if the understanding had come in time to avert this disaster. I won’t dwell on details—I will just sum up the situation.’ ”

“ ‘I would not accept the diagnosis as final and called up an eminent surgeon and friend, who was internationally famous, determined to do everything in my power to save the life of this noble girl. He arranged to examine Elynor the following day. Michael, it was even worse than I anticipated. Elynor had trouble with her lungs and would not be able to take an anesthetic; the breast would have to be cocainized and taken off piece by piece.’ ”

“ ‘Great God, Duchess! what are you saying,’ Michael cried, springing to his feet. He was shaking like

a man with the ague and it took some effort to control himself. "Duchess, forgive me, you are bringing home to me the enormity of the crime I committed. I know now it was a crime. No, I shall never, never, be able to make it up to her. Will I be granted life long enough to make amends—amends, Duchess?"

"I know you are suffering, Michael, I know. I cannot tell you how I felt. I have often tried to analyze my feelings, but even now I am at a loss to understand why I would not accept this diagnosis as final. One more hope, and I clung to it. Michael, I asked the doctor if Elynor could travel and also asked for his assurance that she would reach our destination alive. He answered that if I took the Century train that afternoon and fed her on champagne throughout the journey, she would no doubt live. He stated that the poison had eaten into her system so that solid food was not possible but that he could promise that she would not die enroute."

"Michael, that brave girl took the verdict calmly and her resigned air made it possible for me to carry out my plan. I was completely unnerved—hastened to my hotel—had my maid pack our grips and a kind friend of Elynor's volunteered to go with us."

"We made her as comfortable as possible. She stood the trip fairly well and as the train pulled into the station, the ambulance was waiting and she was rushed to the hospital. I ordered the chauffeur to take me to the greatest surgeon of the age—Michael, the greatest surgeon of the age. He is dead now—his work is finished. Elynor is the living proof of the work of this miracle man. With

him he brought his son-in-law, and these two angels of mercy brought your Elynor back to life."

"That eminent scholar and diagnostician assured us it would be safe for her to take the anesthetic, and that wizard with the knife arranged to operate the following day."

"Michael, I left Elynor at the hospital and took little Lura with me. I told the child to pray for her mother, hard—hard—and I can still see the little baby lips moving in prayer—the little rosy-tipped fingers joined, and the golden curls lovingly caressing the milky whiteness of the skin as she prayed, 'God, please let mother come home soon.' My throat contracted so, I felt I could never utter a sound again. I took the little form into my arms and wept bitterly over her. I feared that morning would make the baby an orphan. There were nine chances out of ten against Elynor."

"I went up to Elynor's room when she was awakening, and I heard her murmur, 'My baby; Duchess, my baby.' Four days later she was having her lunch in the sun parlor. They called her 'Sunshine'—the doctor dubbed her his little 'Queen of Sheba.'

"Michael, go to Elynor; don't be shocked, the incision is deep—very deep. The scar reaches to the waist line—but the breast is well. In the Louvre, in Paris, stands the original of the Venus de Milo. She is so lovely that you do not miss the arms. On the contrary, she stands accusingly, graven in stone to bear witness to man's destructiveness, with no thought for anything but carrying out their own selfish and blood-thirsty craving to satisfy that savage desire for conquest. You stand before her with awe,

and wonder that man can destroy. There stands only a lifeless statue; here a priceless treasure. — — —

"Michael, I am not censuring you. Remember, I just wanted to explain so the shock would not be too great when you see that human form mutilated—that beautiful little Psyche marred."

"I see how this has affected you; don't let Elynor see you like this. She is cured—she is well. It was not cancer, just the beginning of that horrible malady, and quick action effected a permanent cure. She has forgotten the pain. You must not be present when she disrobes to-night; I will go to her and call you when she is ready to go to dinner."

"The name of the doctor, Duchess," asked Michael; "the name of the superman who gave me new-found happiness—his name?"

The duchess answered, "All you need know is that he lived and died in the 'Queen City of the West.' A son survives who is equally a wizard, and they say they knew he would be a great surgeon, because when he was still a little boy he was about to dissect the cat with a large butcher knife, when another member of the family saved the life of the household pet."

"Michael, there is another man who played a large part in the saving of Elynor's life, and I want you to know it because of the peculiar circumstances which made it possible for him to do the impossible. The eminent physician in New York had said that she would not be able to take an anesthetic. That was really the alarming part of the diagnosis. The recognized anesthesiologist who was to give her the anesthetic that morning failed to appear through some misunderstanding. A so-called novice, and a

member of that distinguished family of this great surgeon, was called upon to take the place of the missing doctor."

"Duchess, I am so full of sorrow that I cannot see how it will be possible to go back to Elynor and look joyful with this heavy weight lying on my heart. I have exacted a promise from Elynor," said Michael, "that I wanted her face to be wreathed in smiles. How can I comfort her, knowing all the tragic elements with which this day has been filled? It will take superhuman strength for me to keep in the background this terrible thing you have exposed to me. I know I shall want to weep when I look at my little girl and know that in the future I must always feel that I was the cause of mutilating my little goddess of love. All the misfortunes that befell Elynor, I must necessarily feel I am responsible for."

"I want to express my gratitude to you, Duchess, for the kindly manner in which you received me. I do not deserve the slightest consideration and my heart is so full of grief that my eyes feel as if they will overflow in the presence of my little martyr."

"Now, Michael," answered the duchess, "this will never do. You must not give way to your feelings at this time. Play the strong, manly part; summon all your courage. Go and smoke for a while. I will go to Elynor and when we are ready for dinner, I will send for you."

"I have asked Harold L'Amour to take dinner with Marie in my drawing room and told him that we will join them after dinner. I have taken the liberty of

telling them that you will not object if they are present to-night when you relate some of your adventures to us. I think it will do Marie good and we can gently break the news to Elynor that Marie is her sister. It will not be necessary to speak of their father. Elynor never had any affection for him and did not know or understand a father's love. Therefore, as he is practically a stranger, we need not make her sad by this awful tragedy."

"I will talk to Marie and ask her to keep silent about herself. We will tell Elynor as much as she need know for the time being. In that way Elynor will be kept in happy ignorance of to-day's events."

With these words, the duchess dismissed Michael and took Lucy with her to help dress Elynor for dinner. When the duchess and Lucy entered Elynor's sleeping apartment she was in the act of dressing. In spite of the gorgeous array that Michael had gathered in all parts of the world for her, she had chosen a simple black velvet gown, paneled with apple-green brocaded satin. In the little frock, which she chose with such good taste, was expressed the most judicious feminine knowledge of what would appeal to the serious side of the man who had lain under the stars on the battlefield. However, she felt he would enjoy seeing her display some of the gorgeous gifts he brought her, so around her waist she clasped a jeweled belt, which was once worn by the fair Marie Antoinette. The string of pearls Michael had placed conspicuously before her seemed to call to her that it wanted to encircle the swan-like neck and lay closely caressing her beautiful skin. Her hair was piled high on her head, and, from a light tint, it had changed

to burnished gold; the gray that mingled with it was barely perceptible. Her eyes were large and shining—the smile had changed her mouth—and the lips seemed to invite the caresses of the gods. Happiness had transformed her from a mature, sad-eyed woman to a light-hearted, joyous girl.

When the duchess entered, Elynor threw her arms around her. “My dear friend,” she exclaimed, “could one dream there was so much happiness in the world—that such things could be? I have but one wish now, Duchess. I want to see you as glowing as I am to-night, and I suspect that there is somebody that can make those eyes shine and bring the color to your cheeks.”

“Elynor, I see that you are brimming over with happiness, that you are trying to make me catch a few of the drops which you won’t miss.”

“Duchess,” said Elynor, “I wish you were not so pessimistic. Why do you insist on enjoying everybody else’s happiness and refuse to take a share of it for yourself? Never mind, Duchess, I saw you get that wire this morning; I saw your eyes brighten, and I am not so sure that you are as indifferent to Sir Gilbert as you pretend to be.”

At that moment, Michael appeared in the doorway. “Duchess, I could not wait until you sent for me. I am quite fit,” he announced.

He looked from the duchess to Elynor, opened his arms and gathered her to his heart and gazed into her upturned face with the emotion that only those who have been loved in a like manner can understand.

“My little queen—my little beauty—” he murmured, “you will be enthroned in my heart always,

and the picture of you to-night will never be effaced. I will dress for dinner now."

"Yes," said the duchess to Michael, "I am going to take Elynor with me and I will be ready whenever you wish to call for us."

When the duchess and Elynor had reached her suite, they found Marie dressed in a dainty, little gown, and reclining on the cushions which the stewardess had arranged in a picturesque fashion. Although Marie was very sad, she looked very sweet and young, and it would have been difficult to tell that she had passed through a terrible ordeal. The shy and expectant look on her face told the duchess that she and Harold had come to a perfect understanding. Of course, the duchess readily guessed that it was because of the very tragic elements which had taken place in the last twenty-four hours that made possible this intimacy between these two young people. She knew pity was akin to love.

The look of amazement on Elynor's face brought the duchess to the realization that an explanation of Marie's presence in her rooms was imminent. The duchess was about to inform Elynor of some of the events that had taken place while she was asleep, without revealing the tragic side to her, when Elynor's glance wandered to the table on which was lying the letter and small photograph that had brought such a shock to the duchess. Elynor walked to the table and picked up the photograph—crossed over to Marie—stooped down and kissed her tenderly. The duchess looked on in astonishment at this strange scene.

Elynor turned to the duchess and said, "Going

through my brother's papers this morning, I came across this letter, which was addressed to my father and was unsealed. This small picture was lying next to it. I was curious to know who the beautiful young girl was, and, turning it over on the other side, found the following note, 'To my dear boy, from father and sister Marie—taken on the ranch.' ”

“The chance resemblance, which seemed to trouble us so much,” continued Elynor, “was made very clear to me, and the bits of conversation that we overheard verified my suspicions that this most extraordinary thing might be possible. I was about to read to you my brother's letter and speak of the picture, when Michael appeared on the scene. Duchess, please don't say anything to him about it for the present, as I do not want to mar the evening for him. I wanted to re-read my brother's letter and make sure that I was not mistaken, when he alludes to Marie as his sister and speaks of the stranger's visit to the ranch.”

At this, Marie broke into the conversation excitedly, with “Yes! Yes! I remember you now. The same sweet-faced little girl that brother spoke of so often. He showed me the picture of you which he always carried with him. How strange it all seems that at such a time and in such a place I find my sister when I need help and sympathy most.”

“Marie,” said Elynor, “a sister who will try to straighten out your trouble for you and stand by you and protect you from that vicious man whose victim you have become.”

The duchess was staring hard at Marie. Marie glanced towards her inquiringly, and in the duchess' eyes she read a significant expression which seemed

to tell her to keep silent. Marie answered by raising Elynor's hand to her lips and then Elynor said to the duchess: "Please dress now; Michael will be here any minute and I don't want an opportunity for a moment's conversation."

There was a knock at the door and Harold appeared in the doorway. Marie blushed and, turning to Elynor, she remarked, "Elynor, I want you to meet my new friend, Mr. Harold Duane L'Amour."

"I am so glad to know you, Mrs. Markley," Harold responded. "I have heard you spoken of so often and I want to tell you that it is a great joy to have the privilege of knowing you, particularly as my uncle always used you as a model when he referred to an ideal woman."

"Harold," answered Elynor, "with that pretty speech, you have broken the ice that conventionality forces us to surround ourselves with. I here and now declare you a member of our charmed circle. Since I am taking you so intimately into the family embrace I am going to entrust into your care, our dear Marie. In the course of the evening, she will tell you how much she is a part of our family."

"Mrs. Markley, I quite understand that I owe my gracious reception to the joyous mood you are in," replied Harold."

"The duchess told me the glad tidings—that you and Colonel Markley have been reunited to-day, after having been lost to each other so many years. I heard much of the story while a guest at my uncle's, Sir Gilbert's, home. I am so excited and want to tell you how glad I am to have a part assigned to me in this family reunion. It is too bad Sir Gilbert could

not arrange to be present. How complete it would all be, and I am sure the duchess will miss him more than any of us," said Harold, with a roguish glance at the duchess, who had just entered.

"You wicked boy," rejoined the duchess, as she caught his last words.

The duchess was charming in a gold and chantilly lace costume, her stately carriage giving her the air and appearance of the court and period of Louis XIV.

"Oh, Duchess!" exclaimed Elynor. "What a siren you are. I am afraid you have designs on my husband."

"No, Elynor, I am simply trying to impress him with my grandeur.' What I lack in youth and beauty, will be emphasized by the sweetness and simplicity which you so adroitly express in your costume to-night. You are just trying to make me forget that I am dependent upon your good graces this evening, and, with your lord and master at the helm, I shall have to content myself with the crumbs that I will find at the festive board. Even Harold has arranged with Marie to have dinner served here. Marie pretends that she is not well enough to go into the dining room."

Elynor glanced inquiringly at the duchess and vaguely wondered what had become of the man who, early that morning, had been such a factor in clouding Marie's life. The duchess answered her look by saying: "I will tell you all about it after dinner, Elynor. That sinister influence has been removed and will trouble Marie no more."

Michael knocked at the door. Elynor received him and experienced a new thrill when she saw the tall, handsome, dignified gentleman in evening

clothes standing before her. She turned proudly to the duchess and said, "Duchess, this is my husband."

The joy of it!—the joy of it!—when she bowed mockingly to the duchess. There was a quizzical look in Michael's eyes and he smiled broadly at Elynor's light-heartedness, as he observed:

"Elynor, dear, you are radiating sunshine; you are filling everybody's heart with gladness. I hope to see you always this way."

Michael turned to Harold and extended his hand, adding: "I am glad of the opportunity to say a few words to you before dinner. Your uncle often spoke of you to me when you were a little boy. He was so full of you when I had the good fortune to again see him on my return to America that you will be surprised to know that he even told me the story of the day when you donned your first pair of long pants. Harold, I am afraid we are all very childish to-night, and you will have to excuse us. We are all deserving of a little joy to make up for the sorrow with which our lives have been filled. What a marvelous thing it is that we are gathered here to-night with the future holding out its promise of happiness to all of us. After dinner I hope to hold your interest and attention by the tales I will bring you from afar."

With courtly grace, Michael turned to the duchess and Elynor, offered his arms, and they wended their way to the dining salon. The captain and a few of the privileged guests were already seated at the table when they entered, and rose at their approach. The table was elaborately decorated with floral designs and a miniature of the steamer was placed in the center with the American and French flags intertwined.

The captain had given orders to the orchestra to strike up the American anthem when they reached the table, and all the passengers rose to pay tribute to America and, incidentally, pay homage to the American officer, who had so gloriously defended his country and had the good fortune to come out of the dreadful charnel house unscathed.

It was the first time that Elynor had appeared in evening gown for dinner and, therefore, the passengers did not recognize in the queenly little girl at Michael's side the duchess' secretary. The duchess kept the entire table interested by her many tales and adventures of her travels, so Elynor and Michael were free to confine their attentions to each other.

"Michael! Michael!" said Elynor, during the course of the dinner, "do you remember the night we became engaged, when I took all the food out of the refrigerator, and your mother was so angry? I am reminded of it to-night, with all this magnificence and all these delectable things to eat; and the champagne, flowing as it were, from fountains. In spite of it all, I find that spiritual food emanating from you will satisfy my hunger, as it did that night."

"Elynor, sweetheart; personally I would have preferred to be alone with you, but the captain was so insistent at celebrating our reunion, and his kindly heart has been so filled with the thought that he could add to our happiness by tendering us this dinner, that I could not refuse him. After to-night you and I are going to go into the heart of the woods and live in a hut—just you and I—just you and I."

At the close of the dinner the captain handed Elynor a sealed box and asked her not to open it until

she retired that night. Elynor guessed by the twinkle in his eye that there would be a laugh in it and her blushes brought an answering smile from the captain. After dinner the duchess, Elynor, and Michael took a short walk on the deck and found Harold standing alone, gazing over the side of the vessel. The dreamy look on his face brought a hearty laugh from Michael.

Michael took Harold's arm and said: "Come, my boy, let's smoke; the ladies can get along without us for a little while. You can continue to dream in the smoking room. I always could make love better when I saw my dream girl through a hazy cloud. Imagination is a wonderful factor through which to approach a reality. Shadow and substance are so closely interwoven, and to the lover a step beyond means 'her' presence. Let us walk a bit."

Michael kissed Elynor and left them at the duchess' door. They found Marie gazing sadly and rapturously at a sheet of paper on which were some words set to music.

"Elynor, dear," Marie said, "Harold has written a poem and set it to music, and has dedicated it to you and Michael."

"Oh, let me have it, Marie," eagerly exclaimed Elynor. "Aren't the words perfectly beautiful, Duchess? Look at them—what a genius that boy is! I can hardly wait until Harold plays it for me. Come, Duchess, let's join them. I am sure Harold would rather play than smoke, anyway."

"Marie, dear, we will be back shortly; a little meditation will do you good. Did you enjoy your dinner? I notice you ate very little. I can understand, Marie," said Elynor, "I think I ate less."

With dancing steps and joyous heart, she flew out of the room, followed by the duchess, to find Michael and Harold. They were seated in a corner of the lounge. Elynor tiptoed up to Michael's side and put her hands over his eyes. Michael's head was thrown back, and as he took the dainty little fingers in his hand he kissed them.

"Michael," she said, "I want you to see the wonderful poem Harold composed this afternoon."

"You are mistaken, Mrs. Markley," said Harold. "I composed that poem and set it to music in America. I had heard all about you and Lura through my uncle and had this written, not dreaming that I would have the pleasure of presenting it to you so soon. I left rather unexpectedly to visit with some of my colleagues and, therefore, was not informed that Colonel Markley would be on the steamer. Come, Mrs. Markley, I will play it for you and give you the key in which it will harmonize with your voice. I know your husband will enjoy many evenings listening to its comforting message."

"Harold," said Elynor, after she had heard him play the beautiful song. "You will please go to Marie now, as I do not want a great musician like you to hear my rendition of your masterly composition."

SONG OF SONGS

"BABE O' MINE"

In the arms of the aurora they brought her,
This beautiful baby of mine;
In the large, brown eyes of my baby,
The soul of my Michael would shine.

In the burnished gold hair of my Lura,
The light glint of my Michael gleamed forth;
In the peach-blossom cheek of my Lura,
The dreams of my Michael were reborn.

REFRAIN

And she saw in the eyes of her Michael,
Her baby—her darling—her own;
And in the sheen of the hair, of her treasure,
Was the gold glint of her lover of yore.

And she lay in the arms of her Michael,
The hero—the man of her dreams;
And would drink from the stream of his glory,
The nectar that happiness brings.

And in peace and in deep understanding,
Celestial highways they'd roam;
And tread together the path,
Which would lead them to God's throne.



ELYNOR SINGS BABE O' MINE TO MICHAEL

Elynor seated herself at the beautiful *Weber* piano and then softly sang the sweet words of the lullaby, which brought to her hungering heart the desire to be near her baby girl. When Elynor had finished the song she gazed up at Michael, who was looking down at her with tender, misty eyes. The duchess' sympathetic face easily conveyed to the onlooker that this trio was closely attached by the tie that binds."

Some of the passengers had sauntered into the salon, whereupon the happy three adjourned to the duchess' cabin. They found Harold reading to Marie; and standing at the entrance of the door was a beautiful little dark-skinned boy dressed in native costume, holding aloft, with dignity and serious air, a red cushion, on which was a precious inlaid box of gold. Elynor and the duchess were so startled at this unexpected apparition that they thought for a moment the subdued lights were playing havoc with their imagination and that they were "seeing things." The last few days had been so filled with amazing and thrilling experiences, they were beginning to feel that everything was unreal, and they thought perhaps the happy mood they were in was responsible for this unnatural vision.

Michael was standing behind them, and when Elynor turned to look at him inquiringly he laughingly said:

"That is my surprise, Elynor; I brought you this gift from a far-off country. The body of the boy is black, but his father's heart was all white. He was my shadow on the battlefield, and if a deadly missile was aimed at me his body was always thrust forward to receive the death-dealing blow. If he were alive

to-day he would be clothed in medals for his many acts of heroism on that field of carnage. He made but one request of me when he died, and that was to care for his little boy—so, Elynor, in spite of the fact that his skin is black, I want you to try to help and guide him.”

The child did not understand what Michael said, but when he saw the ladies he came forward, knelt at Elynor’s feet and held out the box to her. Elynor received it graciously and Michael addressed a few kindly words to the child.

“Now let us be seated comfortably and I will begin the tale of my adventures,” said Michael. “I know you are very curious as to what the box contains, so I will set your mind at rest at once.”

Michael opened the box and from it took a beautifully bound leather Bible—a little silver box—and a golden jeweled cross. “I see the amazed look on your faces,” said Michael.

“Dear Duchess, in the course of my story you will learn what each one of these sacred objects stand for and how they came into my possession. Each of them represents the basic principles upon which this world is grounded and without which it must fall.”

“In the precious silver metal is embodied the whole of the law of life—ten commands—obey—and life is perfect. I had them encased in silver and call them speech. In them lies Israel’s ‘Hope.’

“The little Bible, a book of science—I call it ‘Faith.’

“The jeweled cross, ‘Charity Divine,’ for, what greater thing can a man do than lay down his life for his brother?

"I call speech silver, but in this emblem I read Golden Silence."

"HOPE—FAITH—and CHARITY."

"When will we reach that state of perfection when we will recognize in our fellowman not a stranger but a member of the large human family, as it was intended from the beginning of time—when in him will lay our Hope—and through him will come our Faith, and because of him we will be filled with Charity?"

CHAPTER XV

The Awakening

"I promised my dear Elynor that on long winter evenings, when we are gathered around the hearth in our homeland, I will tell her many a tale that will make her understand how from great heights I descended into the depths, and in dark, noisome places, where crime concealed itself from the light, I learned to know and understand humankind. Now that the journey is ended I have come to know God's purposes. I understand now that he took me by the hand and said, 'Son of man, here is the universe—if you want to be of service to your fellowman you must understand every phase of his life and get at the cause that brings about the effect of his misdoings, so you will know all the dangers that lurk in hidden paths in which crime abides'; so Michael began the tale.

"Sir Gilbert has told you what happened after I left the house that memorable night. I have only to add that my heart was so full of bitterness that, from a great believer, I became a pronounced atheist. To me life was worse than useless, but I had to go on with it somehow and determined that I would cease to struggle against this wild impulse that was urging me to commit all sorts of misdeeds. I wanted to get away as far as possible from those whom I once knew—to cast my lot among strangers and drift with the tide. I dreaded meeting former friends and so went to New York and buried myself in the so-called 'Underworld.' "

As Michael was speaking, Elynor had taken his hand in hers and was looking up at him with a fixed and startled gaze. Marie and Harold were listening intently.

"To-night I will confine myself to the story I am about to tell you of how I was brought to my senses by a little old woman whom I met on the eve of Yom Kippur, who brought me to the realization that the life I was leading was worse than criminal," continued Michael.

"Michael, dear," pleaded Elynor, "please do not tell us anything that will make you unhappy to-night."

"No, dear, that is not my intention. You will like my story of the little old woman because its simple tale will bring you the message of the great mother-love which I encountered when it was my good fortune to meet this noble, saintly woman. "

"I will say only this, that my life was so filled with degradation, had I not met with this good influence, my decision was to put an end to myself. "

"I awakened on Yom Kippur morning, dazed, ashamed, realizing that such things could not be. I must do one of the two things: make up my mind to live right or die. I did not have the courage to take my life. I must live and repent and turn aside from the worthless life I was leading.

"I had eaten nothing for twenty-four hours. Could I go through with the fast all day? Yes! from somewhere would come help to guide me aright—to strengthen me in my new resolves. I knew that it would be impossible to get a seat in a temple that day, as all the Jewish houses of worship would be filled to overflowing. There was only one chance. I recalled

seeing a new structure that had just been erected but was not quite completed on the inside. It was to this structure that I led the little old woman whom I met the evening before. When I met her she was alone and seemed to hesitate crossing the streets. I took her arm and guided the uncertain, fearing steps. She was weeping and clinging to my arm. Before me rose the vision of my own dear mother whom I had abandoned so ruthlessly—so selfishly—and if I had had wings I would have flown to her. She, too, would be alone that day. I wickedly and sinfully had destroyed her home. I, the bigot—I, the religious fanatic—I, that saw only evil in others—‘I forgot to take the mote out of my own eye.’

“I had condemned you, my darling, because you were worshiping at the wrong shrine—I was a madman. In your great hour of sorrow you called on the divine Father—cried out to your saintly mother, and for this I left you; bigot, fool that I was!”

Elynor softly kissed the bronzed cheek—the duchess turned away to hide her emotions—Harold was looking at Michael with mingled feelings, wondering that a strong man could be so weak. Marie—Marie had buried her face in her hands and was sobbing aloud.

“I know, dear ones, that I am rending your hearts,” said Michael, “but I also know that when I have finished we will all be better off and grateful for the opportunity to have searched about in our hearts if aught remains of sin and arrogance.”

“Michael,” said the duchess, “please continue. I am deeply moved by your story of the little old saint wending her way alone to commune with her Maker.”

“Yes, Duchess, you are only interested, but could

you have seen that saintly old face—her submissive silence—that not one of those whom she had raised with such loving care were with her to guide the enfeebled steps—to protect from accident the beloved mother who to me represented all mothers!”

“Coming towards us was another mother. Her babe was about to cross the street—an automobile was approaching at full speed. A look of fright on the face of the mother of the child—a shriek—not a moment’s hesitation—the babe’s life was important—hers did not count. The babe was saved, but the mother paid. An accident—we passed on. The little old mother was told it was not serious. She whispered that she would pray for the babe’s mother.”

“I led her to the synagogue. At the threshold I stopped and could hardly believe my eyes. The interior of the modest little structure was unfinished.”

“Unfinished,” echoed the duchess.

“Yes, unfinished! The walls had not been plastered—the women’s gallery (so-called) was supported by iron joists and declared safe. Boards had been nailed around it so there would be no danger of anyone falling to the floor below, and were covered with white muslin. What impressed me most was the wooden staircase with its rude hand railings; and my little old lady was mounting fearlessly, laboriously, but mounting, mounting. I followed, trying to guard her footsteps—ready to catch her if she should fall, but no, an inner force sustained her. Up—up, she went, and when we reached the gallery she turned to me with a smile and said, ‘See, I have nothing to be afraid of—God is with me. I came to pray for my children.’

“Then she confided to me the great honor the presi-

dent of the congregation had conferred upon her; she had been placed in a seat next to his family, in the front row. Elynor, darling, I wish you could have been with me and seen what that front row was. The most perilous place in the 'Schul.' I tested the boarding and feared that it might collapse. I tried to point out the danger to that sweet old lady, but oh, no, she was not afraid—God was there, and if that was to be the way she was ready. 'What more glorious thing than to pass into God's keeping in his own house?' she answered."

"Oh, my dears—my dears—that little old lady was in my dreams all that night and I awakened in terror many times dreaming the gallery had collapsed—the little old mother was buried in the ruins—nobody there—oh, yes, her God—the only one to cling to—not alone—with her God. No husband—no sisters—no brothers—and no children; just God.

"What sublime faith. What courage. An inspiration to all. I could not wait until morning dawned. I dressed and hurried to the synagogue. Her 'Schul,' she called it. I went to help her; to be there if the need came, but she helped me—she saved *me!* Hunger—who could be hungry in this abode? The place was filled with the hosts of heaven. At one time, while my soul was prostrate and my face buried in the dust, I fancied I heard the sound of celestial voices, like the tones of an organ. I looked about, but there was no evidence of a musical instrument anywhere and no place for concealment. Every nook and corner was filled with worshipers; young and old were gathered there. Then I discovered a choir of six boys, who had hurriedly been pressed into service and were producing these heavenly sounds by humming a chant which

was an exact reproduction of the tones of an organ. Primitive you would call it; yet sweet, how sweet were the tones. They took me back to rich, green pastures and to David's harp. He, the shepherd—we, the flock."

"I had no time for philosophy. I was reading the written word—food—food—all day. The gross clay was filled, as is a vessel, with spiritual essence, buoyed up by the stream that carried it to the harbor. I covered the entire wastes; on—on—ever upward. On all sides smiles and praises to the Lord of heaven and earth. Nothing to fear; all was well and when the shades of evening fell, all hearts were filled with joy."

"Oh, my dear ones, he who was not in that holy place that day has never lived. The magnificent temples, in which were gathered the wealth and culture of the community, could not have felt this thrill that I experienced in being privileged to be one of the congregants of this holy place."

"I shall remember that day of regeneration. The little old saint coming down the staircase, alone—no, not alone, the officer of the law was there to safeguard the lives of the congregants. He made those who followed her so closely, wait, as she slowly descended, and when she reached the foot of the rude staircase, which reminded me of Jacob's ladder, I knew that Jacob's dream was a reality and his hosts would continue to walk up and down—up and down, until the end of time."

"I took her by the hand and wished her a happy New Year. I kissed her reverently, and then she whispered to me that she had prayed for me. For me! I would try to be deserving of her prayers! I

would begin all over again; she was worth it. To her I owe the new Michael. In her, and because of her, I honor all motherhood. I would make myself fit and on bended knees come back to my own—would look for wealth in all corners of the earth to shelter and protect from want those that were mine own and those whom we regard as strangers. Strangers—strangers—‘I was a stranger and you took me in.’ My little old woman; the little old mother. Yes, I would start at once; I needed nothing. I would be strong again; I would call back my lost manhood by sheer force of will. I would do honor to the dear, little old mother; I would be the man she thought I was.”

“Michael,” said Elynor, “what became of the little old mother? Didn’t you try to find out more about her?”

“Elynor, dear, I wish you hadn’t asked me that. Your sensitive heart would be pierced through if I told you nobody seemed to remember the mother on that day. The children were scattered and so busy; it would be so inconvenient to come such a distance and neglect their own families. Yes, she had a son whom she adored. He was very good to her. Unhappily, he was ill that day, but she told me that she prayed for them all and was sure that God would answer her prayers and make them all prosper.”

“So she was not poor at all, Michael,” exclaimed Marie.”

“Poor!—child, poor!—she was the only one that was rich. The others were worse than poor. Their material wealth could not have bought a ray of the sunshine which was reflected in the benignant, old face.”

“Think of what she did for me that day. She re-

stored my faith and pointed out my duty. Not one of her rich relatives came near her that day, but when I led her up the flight of stairs to the place she called 'home,' a little child came to greet her and the little rosy lips lisped 'Grandma' and the old face was glorified. I knew then that it will be as it is written, that 'a little child shall lead them.'"

"And now of my wanderings I will say no more. Just a passing survey and the battlefield scene, which brought me back to mine own. As it is growing late, I will be brief. Marie's head is drooping now. I will skip the details."

"I will preface my remarks by telling you, Elynor, darling, so as not to keep you in suspense, that it was our baby who discovered me on the battlefield. I was the enemy attacking. When I awakened to consciousness I found clutched in my hand this little locket and knew from the faces and inscriptions that I had found my baby and in her I was reborn."

"A few days after Yom Kippur, I decided to take up a course in mechanical engineering. A few years later I became interested in an automobile plant and prospered, and life began to take on a new interest for me. I bought a half interest in the firm and when my partner retired I bought his shares and became sole owner. A short time later my business was flourishing and I had occasion to go abroad. While in Paris I bought an interest in a concern which was building aeroplanes."

"A few years before war was declared I was still in Paris," narrated Michael. "The firm I was with began to receive large contracts for planes. This kept me occupied with these new interests. I had left the control of my business in America to a very efficient

man, and so arranged that he take full charge of my interests at home. In the meantime, of course, I made every effort to get tidings from my dear ones at home. I wrote letters, but received no answers."

Elynor was about to speak, when Michael interrupted her by saying: "Yes, I know now, dear, the letters were never received. Mother has told me."

"When war was declared many of the employees enlisted immediately. Among them was a young boy whom I was particularly interested in. Although he had been studying art, it was amazing how quickly he adapted himself to the new study which would fit him to enter the air service. His enthusiasm awakened in me the desire to know him better. One day he confided to me that he was an orphan and was sent abroad to study by a patron, who had taken him from an orphanage. His father died while he was still very young. He had just lost his mother in an automobile accident. Often I found him gazing, with a longing look in his eyes, at a small photograph. I came upon him unexpectedly one day, and was surprised to see the face of a sweet, young girl. I was attracted by her red-gold hair and asked him if he had painted this miniature. It seemed almost an exact reproduction of 'Titian's Flora.' Then he told me there was a very sad story connected with this miniature."

"Now, Elynor, my darling, I am going to give you great joy in what I am about to tell you. The miniature of the lovely face was our Lura; the boy was her Robert."

"But here is the startling part of the story. Robert is not a Christian Scientist. All the male members of Robert's family, from time immemorial, have been

priests of Israel and had Robert's father lived, he would have dedicated Robert to the service of God."

"At the age of five Robert could say his prayers in Hebrew, and at the age of twelve they called him a prodigy."

"When his mother took up Christian Science his devotion to her—his ideal—opened up a new train of thought, and so Lura learned the whole of religion, its ideals from the idealist and dreamer, who is now her husband."

Michael had barely finished speaking, when Elynor leaped to her feet, threw her arms around his neck, and said: "Michael, you have brought me the greatest joy that a mother's heart can know. My happiness is complete. I am almost selfish enough to wish that the tale should end here and now."

"Yes, Elynor, darling," smiled Michael, "I am afraid I have anticipated my story. I assure you that I made heroic efforts all day to keep these glad tidings to the very last, but I think I was hungry for the look of joy on your face. All evening I noted that your happiness was not complete—you were wishing that our little girl, by some miracle, would find that the love she had put out of her life was to again become a part of it. So, Elynor, you see that all blessings are possible through the kindly Father."

The duchess was listening in amazement to this almost impossible story, which seemed like a fairy tale, but a few steps away from her was the living truth of how God works out the lives and destinies of those who turn from evil and embrace righteousness.

In Marie's face was expressed renewed hope and high resolve. The joyful message that Michael had

brought to Elynor imbued her with a new courage, and with a sublime and inspired look in her eyes, she read the beautiful love-notes that the song she held in her hands conveyed; then she said:

"Elynor, my dear sister, may I keep the song in memory of the glorious ending of this story of love and happiness which has crowned you both? In the sweet lullaby, so beautifully expressed by our new-found friend, I feel reawakening in me the divine gift with which I have been blessed. So, my sister, may you find in these words everlasting joy."

Harold was bending over Marie as she finished speaking. The duchess, Elynor, and Michael silently left the room.

"Duchess," said Michael, "the night is perfect. We will leave Marie and Harold together and, under the stars, I will finish the tale which can have no interest for those two young souls, whom life beckons on, with its promise of happiness yet to come."

As the hour was late, there were but few passengers on deck. The vessel was sailing along on a phosphorescent sea, like a graceful white swan. The sky was thickly studded with stars, and over the dark robe of night floated a crescent moon. Elynor and the duchess held their breath for a moment when they gazed from the heights above into the depths below. "Everything has conspired to make this a day of days for you both. The sky—the sea—wind and wave are all in harmony. Oh, dear, how glad I am for you," the duchess said to Elynor."

"Yes," observed Michael, "and think how wonderful it is that I am going to have the privilege of depicting the stormy scenes to offset a night like this, when the Creator is manifest in all His work. Calm

and peace in the air—in Him faith and trust, for His hand is at the helm of the vessel, and only He has the power to subdue the waves and command the stars to appear. I am overawed at the sublimity of this scene. I hardly know how to begin my tale, and, perhaps, it is well that I modify it. I had intended to paint a lurid picture, depicting scenes of horrors, but somehow that battlefield seems very far away and very unreal to-night. I will only speak of the moment when I lost control of the plane, and which ended for me my career as a soldier.”

“The Americans had made their first entry in the war and it was necessary to equip many of them with planes to scout about in the skies, as severe fighting was going on all along the battle-front.”

“My firm had received a large order for planes and Robert went up with me to pilot a squadron that was trying them out. Something suddenly happened to the propeller and we were hurled through the air. When I awakened to consciousness I found there were three of us lying in a shell hole, side by side.”

“A little distance away lay the smoldering ruins of the plane. I saw in the lurid glow outlined, *Mt. Sec, and crowning the top of the hill was the sentinel post-flashing signals. Another loud detonation of exploding shells tore up the earth, scattering shrapnel which embedded itself in the stumps of the trees—all that remained of the once fair landscape—and tearing into the tender flesh of the wounded and dying on the fields.”

“Hearing a groan from the lips of a man who seemed to be very close to me, I turned my head and made out in the dim light the features of the kindly chaplain

*Berry-Au-Bac.

who had so heroically gone into the thickest of the fight. He administered the last sacrament to those loyal soldiers who were leaving behind them all earthly possessions to enter into the divine embrace of the Father, who would mercifully heal their wounds and place upon their heads the laurel wreath of immortality."

"On this field of blood and pain, all were washed clean of any stain."

"The chaplain was mortally wounded and I had to stoop close to catch his words. His hands were groping around on the ground, trying to find an object that had slipped from his bosom. I caught a gleam of the jewels and into my memory flashed a scene of the day before, when the chaplain had administered the sacrament to one of the captives taken that day. I remembered how I had marveled, that in that dying hour they were talking to each other as man to man in the presence of their Judge. After kissing the symbol the dying one handed the princely gift to the chaplain, whispering: 'My eyes are open to the light; I fought for what I thought was right. Take this as a pledge of my good faith and consecrate it to the dead.'"

"I picked up the jeweled cross and was about to put it to the dying priest's lips, seeing that he no longer had the power to hold it in his own hands, when I heard him murmur: 'On this battlefield we are brothers worshiping one God, and I absolve you from any sin that you may feel you commit in administering to me this holy sacrament. When the angel of the Lord separates the spirit from its earthly clay you will take this cross, and as the giver commanded me in his last hour to consecrate it to the brave men who died

for their ideal, I now pass it on to you and it shall become your duty to commemorate this day of days on which is born the Brotherhood of Man. Found a refuge and a haven for those who sacrificed their strong, young manhood for a noble cause. Pray that the wrecks of the flower of manhood be received reverently, commiseratingly, and safeguarded from all the ills and vicissitudes that human flesh is heir to. We sent them out to battle for us, and now they become our charge. Woe to him who betrays this trust!

“With the last words his eyes closed. I again sank into a comatose state and almost fancied I heard the silent figure lying next to the chaplain saying: ‘Bear my message on to humanity; you, the chosen messenger of God who will bring hope into every home and sweet charity to the sorely tried, that, above all, they must have Faith.’”

“Suddenly I heard a thundering in the distance, the earth quivered; I opened my eyes and beheld the prophecy fulfilled; fire was destroying the world. To my fevered mind, in the place of the sentinel stood Moses with the Ten Commandments. As the canons continued belching fire and smoke, it seemed as if the sparks effaced the First Commandment.”

“ ‘Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’ ”

(“Yet they were blaspheming God, sneering at his command and destroying their neighbors.”)

“ ‘Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.’ ”

(“In his name they were committing atrocious crimes.”)

“ ‘Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath Day.’

(“How many times has the Sabbath been profaned!”)

“ ‘Honor thy father and thy mother.’

(“They were making the father’s heart bleed, and tearing up the earth of the mother that nourished them!”)

“ ‘Thou shalt not kill.’

(“And they were slaying tens of thousands.”)

“ ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery.’

(“And they reveled in licentiousness.”)

“ ‘Thou shalt not steal.’

(“They were pilfering God’s holy places.”)

“ ‘Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.’

(“The false witness has disrupted the world.”)

“ ‘Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s goods.’

(“And they take their bread from them.”)

“ ‘Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife.’

(“They were not only coveting her but outraging her womanhood and sullyng her offspring.”)

“And then suddenly it seemed that the Judgment Day had come. There was a great upheaval. Mt. Sec was no more; in the great bowl hollowed out by the ingenuity of the human mind seeking for the unknowable, disobeying the injunction, ‘Seek not to know that which is beyond human ken,’ the monster which they themselves had raised destroyed them for all time. And with the fall of Mt. Sec disappeared Moses and the Ten Commandments and the world became chaos. The sky was dark, with the battle smoke ever mounting higher and higher.”

“I heard voices. ‘Abraham, Abraham, where art thou?’

“ ‘Here am I.’



THE SACRIFICE OF ABRAHAM

“ ‘Bring me thy son, thine only son for sacrifice.’

“And Abraham went down into the valley and he got ready Isaac, his son, and placed upon his shoulders the wood to light for the sacrifice. And he brought Isaac and prepared to light the sacrificial fire, but when the Lord had tried Abraham and found that the divine love was stronger than earthly ties, he, in pity for the bleeding heart, sent the lamb.”

“And upon the lamb he put the cross, marking him for the slaughter. Then I saw Abraham raise his hands and praise his God; on his brow was the Holy of Holies, and there I read again the Ten Commandments.”

“It seemed to me that in that lamb was the meekness of the human soul, and that Abraham was blessing the lamb for coming to take the place of his son, again fulfilling the promise of God that the seed of Abraham should live and from it spring forth a mighty nation.”

“The cross which marked the lamb for slaughter was made of gold, and the ten jewels that studded it bound and held in place the law of Moses.”

“Then it seemed to me that the great day had come. The lion had ceased to roar; the lion had laid down with the lamb—the tidings would bring ‘Peace on earth and good will to man.’ ”

As Michael ceased speaking, the duchess and Elynor were gazing out into space, both of them conjuring up the magnificent spectacle that Michael had so vividly pictured.

Elynor turned suddenly to him and flung herself on his breast. Michael held her in close embrace and finished the story of his kinship with the gods:

“Yes, Elynor, my darling, my darling,—I tried very

hard to put you out of my thoughts in those dark days and was successful in doing so, when the love for truth and righteousness had fled; but on that battlefield, my dear, you stood over me as a guardian angel to minister to my soul—to whisper courage in my ear—to give me hope that I would again hold you in my arms—and it was your beckoning me ever onward that gave me the strength to overcome all hardships that God knows were almost beyond human endurance.”

“I learned out there that no matter what you did, or whom you loved, just so long as you left me a small corner of your heart, I would creep into it and be content with the little space you gave me there. I learned many things on that battlefield, and one of the big things was that ‘God made life simple, and man made it complex.’ Conventional teachings had hedged you around and about so that it was absolutely impossible to get to the heart of you, and I feared to touch upon your religious beliefs, mortally afraid that in trying to know just what your beliefs were, I would lose you forever; and, therefore, I thought it best not to probe too deeply.”

“There has been a tacit understanding from time immemorial that religious discussions are dangerous, but how much better it would have been if we had discussed the question fearlessly? Then and there, you and I would have made our decision. Are we to be Christians, or are we to be Jews? Which shall it be, Elynor, Christians or Jews?”

“Jews, Michael. I am a Jewess,” answered Elynor. “Christians! In order to be Christians, we must first of all be Jews, or find a better gospel than the Ten Commandments. What do you call Christianity,

Michael? Since you left me I have studied both sides of the question, and find that Christ lived and died a Jew. Christians would have to deny Christ if they refused to believe that He was first of all, a good Jew. Christ did not preach a new doctrine; He wanted us all to live according to the old one, which was exemplified by His own life. What difference does it make, Michael? We are all created in God's image. He will only recognize us as He sees Himself reflected in us. Our saintly leaders and teachers will gather us in His house and there He will ask no questions, because He knows our path is long and filled with pitfalls, and we must be very, very careful and led by a very strong hand, to finally reach the goal that He planned. 'Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who hath a clean heart and clean hands.' "

"My precious girl!" Michael was weeping. "How perfect it all is—how marvelously the years have brought knowledge and understanding to you! I know the joy of your heart; I feel the throb of your heart. The spiritual essence is so closely interwoven that our protectress is a part of the whole. To her we owe our reunion. She preserved your youth, beauty, and truth, and, at last, gave it back into my keeping, and although she will be with us much of the time only in spirit in the future, she will always be part of the whole."

"Now, my dear ones, let me tell you what I visioned in a dream. When I finish, you will voice the sentiment with me and wish that dreams were realities; that the prophesied days could be; that God's kingdom on earth might be established, and that the

temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt. I saw it all so clearly and so plainly."

"I was floating in space; day was dawning and a deep hush filled the atmosphere. I was hovering over the top of a mountain and suddenly I felt myself falling down—down—ever downward. I tried to grasp hold of something tangible; something by which I could save myself. I caught in my hand what seemed to be a dove—a white dove—and it became a thing of life at my touch. Then, in the great stillness, I heard birds singing. I grasped at a tree that was lying in my path and it stood erect and turned green at my touch, but in itself it was not sustaining. I clutched it—held it tightly—but the branch broke in my hand and only one olive leaf remained on it. I continued to descend lower and lower, and as I was beginning to fall, coming closer to earth, my body seemed to become a thing of substance: it carried in its wake objects upon objects, which seemed to come to life only when I came in contact with them. Each moment my horror grew greater and greater, for on all sides of me, when I reached the earth, were thousands and thousands of serpents, from whose eyes flashed anger; whose tongues shot fiery venom, scorching me with their breath. I was terrified and when I awakened I was on the battlefield."

"The roar of the cannon had ceased—the field was strewn with dead and dying—the lurid flames of exploded shells were darting all about me, and then I fell into a subconscious state and the spirit of the Lord descended upon me. My spirit was lifted up and set down in that hollow bowl. It was dawn and there was a weird, white light shining down, dis-

closing the valley of the dead. Upon it were strewn the bleaching bones of the innocent victims who had been hurled into eternity. God seemed to whisper to me, *'Son of man, can these bones live?'

"And I whispered, 'O Lord, God, thou knowest.'

"Again He said to me: 'Prophecy over these bones and say to them: O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord: behold, I will cause spirit to enter into you and ye shall live; and I will lay sinews upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you and ye shall live.' "

"So I prophesied as I was commanded; and there was a thundering noise and an earthquake; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I beheld and lo! there were sinews upon them and flesh came up and skin covered them above; but there was no breath in them."

"Then He said to me: 'Prophecy ye the breath and say: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon the slain that they may live.' "

"So I prophesied as He commanded me and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

"Then He said to me: 'Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say: "Our bones are dried, our hope is lost, we were clean cut off." Therefore, prophecy and say to them: "Thus saith the Lord God: 'Behold, I will open your graves of captivity and cause you to come out of them, O my people. I will bring you again into the land of Israel and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of them; and I will put my spirit into you and ye shall

*Ezekiel.

live; and I shall place you in your own land and ye shall acknowledge that I, the Lord, have spoken and performed it.' ”

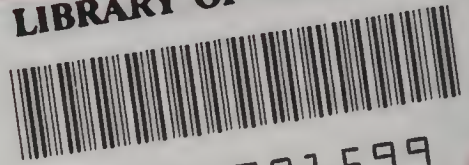
“As the voice died away, that great army stood massed in a body, clothed in airy-white garments, holding high in their hands an olive branch, and above them hovered a dove with outstretched wings, and in his beak was floating the banner of peace. Slowly they began to march towards the promised land with banners unfurled.”

“I awakened to consciousness for a moment and saw set in the firmament of blue where drifted white fleecy clouds tempering the rays of the sun. An aeroplane, with the stars and stripes keeping guard from the sky, looked down on Mt. Sec, in whose tender embrace lay ten thousand soldiers of France.”

“Up the road came a caravan—God’s host of good Samaritans, and on that battlefield they separated the living from the dead and with tender care they lifted the wounded from the ground and carried them to the hospital nearby. On a slab of marble-white they wrote the epitaph of the dead, ‘Remember, this is sacred ground—walk reverently.’ ”

THE END.

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